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THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D. & LL.D.

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,

AND CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF FRANCE.

VOLUME NINETEENTH.

GLASGOW:

WILLIAM COLLINS, S. FREDERICK ST.

LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO.

ON

POLITICAL ECONOMY,

IN CONNEXION WITH THE

MORAL STATE AND MORAL PROSPECTS

OF

SOCIETY.

BY

THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D. & LL.D.

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,

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VOL. I.

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PRINCETON
THEOLOGI

PREFACE

TO THIS EDITION.

Had the main or professed object of the following work been the establishment of a new system of Political Economy, the attention of the reader would have been chiefly, if not exclusively directed to its peculiar doctrines, and to the reasons by which they are supported. But its main object is the application of the science, to a fulfilment no doubt of surpassing practical importance—the moral elevation and consequent economic comfort of society at large; and this, as the great landing-place of the whole demonstration, is that which is most calculated to fill the eye of the reader, and to engross the largest share of his regards, if not altogether to monopolize them. The science stands, as it were, in a place of subserviency or of subordination to the use which is made of it; and appears here rather in the character of an incidental topic—while, with the great majority of those who have written on the subject, it is the elucidation of the science itself viewed as a scheme of doctrine, which forms the great *terminus ad quem* or ultimate design of their authorship.

This peculiarity would have been of less consequence, had the author of these pages taken up the prevalent views of political economy. This would have given him the advantage of readers, with whom he could immediately enter into converse on common ground, or set forth on common principles with himself; and thence proceed onwards to the one task of their proposed application. But as the case actually stands, there is a double task imposed on the reader who shall honour these Volumes with a perusal. If hitherto ignorant of the science, he has first a political economy to learn; and we have endeavoured to present him with such views and doctrines, as, however little recognised in any of the reigning schools, have long been familiar to ourselves, and been indeed for many years the articles of our creed. If again an adept in the science, he has a political economy to unlearn; and this must form a strong initial, in most instances an insuperable obstacle, in the way of our main lesson, with the actual disciples of any of the actual systems of political economy. We expect therefore to meet with more of acceptance, and indeed have actually found it, among those to whom the whole subject was altogether new, than among those preoccupied with notions already acquired—more especially if the notions of Mill and Ricardo, who, though opposed to another section of the utilitarian school, have generated by their writings a race of unyielding and hard utilitarians. We do not even expect much countenance from those unqualified admirers of Smith, who have stood their ground against the novelties of

later schools—though we have ever deemed it the best preparation for an acquiescence in our main and concluding lesson, that one should have become alike intelligent in the doctrines of Smith and Malthus, and so as to be qualified for bringing together and examining in connexion the theory of wealth and the theory of population.

We have attempted in several ways to remedy the disadvantage of which we now complain. There are certain of the economical doctrines on which we have ventured to innovate; and on which, as being of chief scientific importance, we have bestowed a single and separate treatment in the articles of an Appendix, which form a series of distinct essays on various questions of the science. We have furthermore presented our doctrines in the form of a system, by arranging them, at the conclusion of the Appendix, into a sort of digest or synoptical view of our leading principles. In the present, which is the third edition of our work, we have subjoined brief notanda to each chapter; and this with the view of fastening the attention of the reader on such topics as possessed the greatest interest, either in themselves, or in the conclusions to which they lead. And we shall now bring this Preface to a close, by such a brief outline of our scheme, as might best prepare the reader for entering into the principles and design of the whole publication.

Our great object, then, is to demonstrate, that all agricultural and all commercial expedients for the enlargement of human maintenance, have a necessary limit—beyond which if the number of

human beings overpass, or on which if this number with its powers and tendencies of indefinite augmentation press inconveniently, the inevitable effect must be a general destitution and discomfort throughout the mass of society. It is true that the absolute, and at length impassable limit, in reference even to particular countries, and still more in reference to the whole world, may not be reached for centuries to come. But though this ultimate limit, this final and at length immovable barrier, to any further increase in the means of subsistence, may not be arrived at, nor come to a dead stand for many generations—enough to realize all the practical evils of a stinted and straitened condition, if it be a slowly retiring limit constantly urged upon by a recklessly increasing population. The great problem in these circumstances, and it is a problem which is now engaging more of speculation every day, is how to obtain exemption for the great bulk of the community from the distress and degradation in which they are so frequently involved, that it seems to many as if such were the inevitable lot of humanity. We differ from these in believing, that, within our reach, there are the capabilities of a permanent amelioration in the economic state of the commonwealth, and more especially of a great and stable enlargement in the sufficiency and comfort and whole status of the common people. Short of the question which touches the good of their immortality, we know none more interesting, than those which bear on their temporal well-being; and, with all our partialities for a high state and standard of

enjoyment among the working classes, we cannot imagine a more deeply important inquiry relative to any interest on this side of death, than how to elevate, by means of well-paid industry, the general platform of humble life—and so as that the ground-floor of the social and political edifice, shall be overspread with a well-conditioned population.

Innumerable are the expedients which have been proposed for this blissful result; and the great object of our work is to demonstrate the futility of them all save one—or, along with the insufficiency of all merely economical devices, to prove that the distempers of society are mainly resolvable into moral causes, and therefore that the removal of these can only be effected by a moralizing operation. We have long had no faith in the efficacy of any scheme for the mitigation of the evils of our social state, but the Christian education of the people; and it is for the purpose of exposing the inefficacy of all other schemes, that we have found it necessary to attempt such an extensive survey of Political Economy. A reference to, or rather a reckoning with, the various dogmata of that science was unavoidable, in our endeavours to demonstrate the insufficiency of the manifold resources on which philanthropists have calculated, as affording a specific against the destitution of the lower orders. The scheme of home colonization; and the various proposals of employment for the people; and the capabilities of increasing capital for their maintenance; and the openings of foreign trade; and the relief that might be conceived to

ensue from the abolition of taxes; and an indefinite harbourage for our increasing numbers in an extended system of emigration; and, finally, a compulsory provision for the indigent—all these pass in successive review before us; and, if we are so fortunate as to obtain the concurrence of our readers, they will agree with us in the conclusion, that though all should be tried, yet all will be found wanting. Nevertheless we shall not give up in despair the prosperity of that great cause, the object of which is to provide the greatest happiness for the greatest number—believing, as we do, that the sufficiency of the people's means will at length be reached through the medium of the people's intelligence and the people's worth; that there is an inseparable alliance between the two elements of their character and their comfort; and that a thorough education of principle throughout the land, though the only, yet is the sure high road to the economic well-being of the community at large.

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PREFACE

TO THE FORMER EDITIONS.

(FIRST PRINTED IN 1832.)

POLITICAL Economy, though not deemed an essential branch of education for churchmen, touches very closely, notwithstanding, on certain questions, in which both the interest and the duty of ecclesiastics are deeply concerned. The questions of Pauperism and of a Religious Establishment, though no others could be specified, would, of themselves, justify a reference to the lessons and principles of this science, even in a theological course.

But there is one general application that might be made of the whole subject, and which gives it, in our judgment, its principal claim on the earnest and respectful attention of a Christian philanthropist. Political economy aims at the diffusion of sufficiency and comfort throughout the mass of the population, by a multiplication or enlargement of the outward means and materials of human enjoyment. Now, we hold it to be demonstrable, on its own principles, that, vary its devices and expedients as it may, this is an object which it never can

secure, apart from a virtuous and educated peasantry. Our endeavour is to prove, that, in every direction, there is a limit to the augmentation of our physical resources; and that, in virtue of this, there must, especially in old countries, be a felt pressure and discomfort throughout every community, which has either outgrown the means for its Christian instruction, or, in any other way, renounced the habits and decencies of a Christian land. In other words, our object will be gained, if we can demonstrate, that, even but for the economic well-being of a people, their moral and religious education is the first and greatest object of national policy; and that, while this is neglected, a government, in its anxious and incessant labours for a well-conditioned state of the commonwealth, will only flounder from one delusive shift or expedient to another, under the double misfortune, of being held responsible for the prosperity of the land, and yet, finding this to be an element most helplessly and hopelessly beyond its control.

It is obvious of such a task as that which we have prescribed to ourselves, that it cannot fully be accomplished, without an extensive range and survey among the doctrines of political economy. More especially, the theory of wealth had to be examined in connexion with the theory of population; and the great resulting lesson is—the intimate alliance which obtains between the economical and the moral; insomuch, that the best objects of the science cannot, by any possibility, be realized, but by dint of prudence and virtue among the common people.

Some of the text in this volume was recently delivered in Lectures to the Students of the Theological Hall in Edinburgh. We gladly transfer them from the chair to the press, were it for no other reason, than to relieve our academic work, in all time coming, even from the semblance of aught that is extra-professional.* We cannot, however, bid adieu to political economy, without an earnest recommendation of its lessons to all those who enter upon the ecclesiastical vocation. They are our churchmen, in fact, who could best carry the most important of these lessons into practical effect. If sufficiently enlightened on the question of pauperism, they might, with the greatest ease, in Scotland, clear away this moral leprosy from their respective parishes. And, standing at the head of Christian education, they are the alone effectual dispensers of all those civil and economical blessings which would follow in its train.

We are not sanguine either of a general or of an instant reception for the doctrines of our work. Its novelties may long be disregarded or derided as paradoxes. And it is not the achievement of a day, to overturn the principles of a reigning school.

* It may be right to mention, that all which we did deliver upon this subject, was in a separate lectureship of one hour in the week, distinct from the regular lessons of the Theological course, though preparatory to our views on the treatment of pauperism, and other questions in parish economics, which enter largely into the duties and attentions of the pastoral care. It besides formed the natural precursor to another lectureship which we have begun, on the methods and the machinery of Christian education.

And if not very hopeful of an instant acquiescence in our principles, far less do we look for the instant adoption of our practical suggestions. The urgencies of the country may perhaps speed onwards the commutation of tithes, and the measure of a universal education. The commutation of taxes into a territorial impost, will be the work of a later age; though we should rejoice even now, did we witness a commencement however humble, an approximation however slow, to this great political and economical reform.

May God of his infinite mercy grant, that whatever the coming changes in the state and history of this nation may be, they shall not be the result of a sweeping and headlong anarchy; but rather, in the pacific march of improvement, may they anticipate this tremendous evil, and avert it from our borders. There is a general impression upon all spirits, that something must be done. But to be done well, it must not be by the hand of violence, but by the authority of legitimate power under the guidance of principle; by a government having both the wisdom and righteousness to direct, and the strength to execute. Amid the conflicts and agitations of our social state, it will be the heart's desire of every Christian, the fondest prayer of every true patriot, that Religion and Reason may ever preside over the destinies of our beloved land.

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THEOLOGICAL

ON POLITICAL ECONOMY

IN CONNEXION WITH THE

MORAL STATE AND MORAL PROSPECTS

OF

SOCIETY.

CHAPTER I.

On the Increase and Limit of Food.

1. Each science has certain commanding positions, whence, if the observer look rightly around him, he may obtain an extensive view of important truths and important applications. Such a position, we think, has been recently gained in Political Economy, although full advantage has not yet been taken of it. We hold it the more interesting, that it includes within its range, certain unexplored places of the science; and, more especially, that department where the theory of wealth comes into contact with the theory of population, and where the two, therefore, might be examined in connexion.

2. The doctrine, or discovery, to which we refer, is that promulgated some years ago, and both at the same time, by Sir Edward West and Mr

Malthus. It respects the land last entered upon for the purposes of cultivation, and which yields no rent. It is obvious, that land of this inferior productiveness must mark the extreme limit of cultivation at the time—as land of still inferior quality could not be broken up without loss to the cultivator.

3. Any land that is cultivated for food to human beings, must, at least, yield as much as shall feed the labourers who are employed in working it. But it must do more than this. These agricultural labourers require to be clothed and lodged, as well as fed. They must be upheld, not in food alone, which is the first necessary; but in, what may be termed, the second necessaries of life. The people whose business it is to work up these, may in contradistinction to the *agricultural*, be termed the *secondary* labourers of a country. It is evident, that the worst of cultivated land must, at least, be able to feed those who are directly employed upon the soil, and, moreover, those who prepare for the agricultural labourers all the other articles, beside food, which enter into their support or maintenance. Else the cultivation of it behoved to be abandoned. All that land which, by no possible improvement, either in the processes of husbandry or of manufacturing labour, could yield as much as would subsist the agricultural labourers and their secondaries, is doomed, by nature, to everlasting sterility, and must always remain without the scope of cultivation.

4. The imagination is, that the land of greatest fertility was first occupied. Men would naturally

settle on those soils which yielded the most plentiful return for their labour, or which enabled them to subsist with the least labour. It is farther conceived, that, after all the first-rate land had been cultivated, an increasing population flowed over, as it were, on the second-rate land; which, in virtue of its inferior quality, yielded a scantier return for the same labour. As mankind continued to multiply, a still farther descent behoved to be made, through a gradation of soils, each of less fertility than the one before entered on; and so, either requiring a greater amount of labour to draw from it the same food, or yielding a smaller amount of food to the same labour. This process, it is evident, admits of being extended, till the produce of the soil last entered on shall, by the utmost labour which men will expend on it, be barely sufficient for the subsistence of its agricultural labourers, and of their secondaries.

5. In filling up this sketch, or *histoire raisonnée*, of the conjunct process of culture and population, economists have given in to certain conceptions, which require to be modified. They sometimes describe the process, as if, at each successive descent to an inferior soil, the comfort and circumstances of the human race underwent deterioration; or as if, under the impulse of a hard and hunger-bitten necessity, men were driven, like so many famishing wolves, to those intractable soils, whence they could only force out a more stinted and penurious fare than before—and that, at a greater expense of toil and of endurance. Agreeably to this imagination, even economists and calculators

have, by a reverse process, found their way to a golden age at the outset of the world—when men reposed in the lap of abundance; and, with no other fatigue than that of a slight and superficial operation on a soil of first-rate quality, richly partook in the bounties of nature. But when all this soil came to be occupied, and the race continued to multiply, land of a second quality behoved to be taken in—and the conception is, that, at every such transition from a better to a worse land, a heavier imposition of toil was laid upon workmen, and a smaller amount of produce was yielded to them in return for their industry. This, certainly, represents to us the species in a course of deterioration, at least, in as far as the comfort of the labouring classes is concerned. They are pictured to the eye, as if goaded on by hard and stubborn necessity at every step of this movement, and going forth in starving multitudes, from that better land, which is now too narrow for them. At each new stretch of cultivation, a more ungrateful soil has to be encountered, on which it is thought that men are more strenuously worked, and more scantily subsisted, than before—till, at the extreme limit of this progression, a life of utmost toil, and utmost penury, is looked to as the inevitable doom that awaits the working classes of society.

6. Now, generally speaking, this is not accordant with historical truth. We do read of extensive emigrations, by men who felt themselves straitened in their native land, and went forth in quest of a settlement. But we do not witness, throughout the various countries of the world, the successive

degradation of their peasantry. There may be fluctuations in their economic state, from year to year, or from generation to generation. But on the survey and comparison of centuries, we should rather say, that there had been a general march and elevation in the style of their enjoyments. There is a seeming incompatibility in this fact with the process which has just been described—and this has cast a suspicion over its reality. Men have been at a loss to reconcile the descent of labourers among the inferior soils, with the undoubted rise which has taken place in their circumstances, or in the average standard of their comfort. This has darkened the whole speculation, and brought on a controversy, which admits, however, we think, of a very obvious and easy adjustment.

7. For as the fresh soils that had to be successively entered on became more intractable, the same amount of labour, by the intervention of tools and instruments of husbandry, may have become greatly more effective. The same labour which, by a direct manual operation, could raise a given quantity of subsistence from soil of the first quality, might, with our present implements of agriculture, raise as much from soil of the last quality that has been entered on. If, from one generation to another, a descent had to be made on more stubborn and impracticable soils, and which, therefore required a far more operose treatment, ere they could be brought to yield as abundantly, as did their predecessor soils, in the career of agriculture—it should be remembered that, by this time, the labour of human hands might have been helped and facili-

tated, to the whole extent of the difference, by the implements of labour. With the scraping and stirring of first-rate land by the branch of a tree, there might be as much of real muscular work required to obtain from it the same quantity of produce, as from second-rate land by means of a wooden spade, or from third-rate land by means of an iron one, or from fourth-rate land by means of a plough, or lastly, from fifth-rate and following lands, by means of those successive improvements in the form of the plough, whereby it is made more effective than before. We will not yet designate the implements of husbandry by the name of capital; but, considering them merely as the products of labour, it is enough at present to affirm, that the whole labour, first, of making the plough, and then of working it on the soil of the last and latest quality, might fetch back as liberal a return of food to the cultivators, as an equal quantity of labour bestowed either directly by the hand, or with the intervention of some rude and clumsy instrument on the land that was earliest entered on. It is thus that there may at once be a progress in agriculture, and yet, through all the gradations of it, the species be upheld in as great ease and sufficiency as at first. Instead of the strong impulse of population driving them helplessly and ungovernably onward, to those more inhospitable regions, where they are doomed to all the miseries of a more stinted provision than before,—they may, simply and spontaneously, and without the pressure of any felt agony or violence, have entered on the possession of these regions, because now furnished by art with the

means of extracting, even from the comparative barrenness of nature, as generous a remuneration for their toils, as they before drew from nature's greatest fertility. We are not, therefore, to imagine of the great family of mankind, that as they grew in numbers, and spread themselves over upon tracts of greater sterility than before, they must necessarily sink down into a state of greater endurance, whether in the way of privation or fatigue. It is not always at the call of hunger or distress that these successive movements have been made. They are often made in another character—not in that of famishing hordes, making forcible descent on some untried region, in quest of that which might satiate their cravings; but in the higher character of dominant and devising men, walking forth with master step, and in the triumph of their new energies and acquisitions, to subdue some yet untrodden territory, and force from it as liberal subsistence, as any which their ancestors had ever gotten in more favoured climes. We are not to suppose that every increase of cultivation is marked by an increase of wretchedness. Through its whole process, from the first to the last of it, the species might be sustained on as high a level, and even be made to ascend higher than at the first. And, as at the commencement of cultivation, there might have been impediments to be struggled with at the entrance upon the first land, such as the clearing it of wood,—so, on the extreme verge of our newest cultivation, there might have been helps to labour on the last and worst land, such as the perfection of our modern implements, which could

ensure as generous a repayment for the same quantity of work, in the most recent, as in the most remote stages of this great process.

8. It follows not, that in the act of descending to an inferior soil, men have to put forth a greater quantity of labour for the same return,—because, it may have been some improvement in the modes or operations of husbandry, which has enabled them to make the descent, and to make the same labour as effective on the ground which they are now reclaiming from the waste, as on that which they had last brought within the domain of cultivation. When, therefore, we see the wilds of nature further broken in upon, we are not always to imagine, that it is from the pressure of a felt necessity, by which men have been forced to submit to a more painful endurance, and to put up with a scantier subsistence in return for it. It may have been the pacific, the prosperous result of some enlargement in the powers of agricultural labour; and in consequence of which, men go spontaneously forth on an inferior soil, because now, for the same work, they earn the same recompense as they did on the soil immediately above it. It is thus a possible thing, that cultivation may be extended, without deterioration to the comfort of labourers; and that, along its last possible frontier, there might be stationed as high and well-conditioned a peasantry, as ever flourished in any olden or golden period on the lawns of Arcadia.

9. And cultivation may be extended by an improvement in manufacturing, as well as in agricultural labour. It may be conceived of the land

last entered, that in return for a certain quantity of labour, it yields the subsistence of a hundred families; and that the land next inferior to it cannot be profitably cultivated, because in return for the same labour, it yields the subsistence of only ninety families. Now, overlooking for the present the element of profit, one might conceive these hundred families to be made up of seventy belonging to the agricultural, and of thirty belonging to the secondary class,—it being the employment of the latter to prepare, for the whole hundred, the second necessaries of life. It matters not whether there be such an improvement in agricultural labour, that sixty can do the work of seventy, or such an improvement in manufacturing labour, that twenty can do the work of thirty. In either way, ninety labourers can do as much as a hundred did before; and whereas, formerly, land behoved to return for their labour the subsistence of a hundred families, ere it could be taken in, it may now be taken in, though of such inferior quality, as to return the subsistence of but ninety families. By the former improvement, the agricultural labourers necessary for a given effect, became fewer than before,—by the latter improvement, though still as numerous, they would require the services of fewer secondaries than before. It is thus that a step of improvement in manufactures alone, can give rise to an onward step of extension in agriculture—and just because a method has been devised for the fabrication of as many yards of cloth, by fewer hands, soils of poorer out-field, than any that had yet been reached, may now be profitably

entered upon. An improvement in the form of the stocking machine, may, as well as an improvement in the form of the plough, bring many an else unreclaimed acre within the reach of cultivation.

10. The actual and historical process that has taken place, we believe to be as follows. The labourers of our day work harder than before, but live better than before. They put forth more strength, and receive more sustenance, than they wont to do. There has been an increase on both of these terms; or, such has been the change of habit among workmen, that while greatly more industrious, they, at the same time, have become greatly more luxurious. They at once toil more strenuously, and live more plentifully—putting forth more strength, but withal, drawing the remuneration of a larger and more liberal sustenance. This we apprehend to be the actual change of habit and condition which has taken place, with artisans and labourers, in all the countries of civilized Europe,—so that while, on the one hand, we behold a harder working peasantry, we, on the other hand, behold them more richly upholden, both in the first and second necessaries of life.

11. Now, this may be either a deterioration or an improvement in their circumstances. One can imagine a day of slavish fatigue, followed by an evening of gross and loathsome sensuality,—as is often exemplified in the life of a London coal-heaver, whose enormous wage is absorbed in the enormous consumption, by which he repairs the waste and the weariness of an excessive labour. This, surely, is not a desirable habitude for the

commonalty of any land; nor do we read the characteristics of a high or a well-conditioned peasantry in a state of existence, made up, first of drudgery to the uttermost of their strength, and then of grovelling dissipation to the uttermost of their means. They spend one part of their revolving day in the exercise of powers, which are merely animal; and the other part in the indulgence of enjoyments, which also are merely animal —like beasts of burden, who are more hardly worked than before, and, in return for this, are better fed, and lodged, and littered than before. They are now in better keep than their forefathers; and this puts them into heart for the greater work that is extracted out of them. Still it is conceivable of the work, that it may be so very extreme, as, on the whole, to degrade and to depress these overdone children of modern industry—and that, in spite of the greater abundance wherewith their senses and their spirits are coarsely regaled, during the intervals of their sore bondage.

12. If this be the extreme to which the workmen of our present day are now tending, there is an extreme opposite to this; from which men only began to emerge at the outset of civilization, and which is still realized among barbarous and demi barbarous nations. We advert to the sordid con dition of those, whom nought but the agonies o hunger can impel to shake off an indolence that is else unconquerable; and who, as soon as they have satisfied its cravings, lapse again into the rooted and habitual lethargy of their nature. If they have but enough of sleep, and enough of surfeiting,

they care for no higher gratification; nor will they make one effort, above that level to which they subside, by the weight of their own constitutional sluggishness. Food, of some description or other, they must have—but, having it, they are pleased to live in filth and nakedness, and nearly in utter want of all the secondary accommodations. It is obvious, of such a people, that so long as they abide in this habit, the inferior soils of the earth never will be reached by them. It is even possible that they may stop short at the very first and most fertile of the land; and never taste of that abundance which is within their reach, just because of their insuperable aversion to the labour of extracting it. It is thus that they might doze away their existence on the surface of an earth, whose dormant capabilities they never enter upon; and in vast territories, capable of sustaining millions over and above the few stragglers by whom they are occupied, both cultivation and population may, just because of this moral barrier, have been fixed and limited for many centuries.

13. So that, in reasoning on the causes which have led to the extension of agriculture among sterile and intractable soils, other things must be taken into account, beside the mere energy of the principle of population. We have already shown, how, without bringing this principle into collision with a taste for the enjoyments of life, there may, without any compromise of these enjoyments, and by a mere improvement in the powers of mechanical labour, be a descent among the inferior soils, and so an extension of agriculture, to afford the

increasing population as large and liberal a subsistence as before. And it is evident, the very same thing would happen, with every increase that took place in the amount of manual labour, or in the industrious habits of the people. Certain it is, that, in climes and countries the most favourable to production, we may often witness the squalid destitution of whole tribes, restrained, by the mere force of indolence, from the enjoyment of that plenty, which, with but a little effort, they could so easily realize. Now this proceeds, not from the principle of population being of smaller strength there than in other parts of the world, but from the counteractive force of indolence being there of greater strength. There is a lethargy, or love of ease, in certain temperaments, which will even carry it over the love of offspring; so that, should it not prevent early marriages, it will, at least, prevent a larger proportion of the fruits of marriage from ripening into maturity. Of the many children who are born, a few only will survive the sickliness and the spare living to which they are exposed, from that state of voluntary destitution, wherein their parents will rather abide, than put forth those efforts of industry which they feel to be intolerable. Just as the taste for secondary enjoyments has not yet aroused them to exertion, so neither might affection for their famishing and misguided little ones arouse them. This accounts for the population being stationary in many countries, where, as yet, the first-rate soils have scarcely been entered upon—and it should convince us, that something else than the mere energy of this principle must be

adverted to, when we reason on that historical progress which has conjunctly taken place, in the extension of husbandry and in the numbers of mankind.

14. But if, by the strength of human indolence, the process of cultivation may be arrested at an earlier stage in the scale of descending fertility, then, should this indolence, by some cause or other, be removed, or got the better of, the process may be again set at liberty. Now, there is no influence by which man is more effectually roused to exertion, than the excitement of new desires, which require exertion ere they can be appeased. Let him, by any chance, come to have a greater number of wants than before; and, to supply these, he may be led to work a greater number of hours than before. His taste for idleness will give way to his taste for other things, when he comes to like these other things better than his idleness. If he will not be satisfied but with a certain style of dress and lodging, or with the enjoyment of certain luxuries which his forefathers never dreamed of—then, rather than be without them, he will put forth a strenuous and sustained effort of regular industry, which his forefathers would have felt to be intolerable. This change of habit has actually taken place in modern Europe. Workmen both labour more, and live better, than their ancestors.

15. This is one important service which commerce has rendered to agriculture. It was the instrument of that great economic change which took place at the termination of the middle ages —when landlords dismissed their retainers, and expended the surplus produce of their estates on

the purchase of those articles which trade and manufactures brought to their door. This great transition has been well described both by Adam Smith and Dr Robertson; but it should not be overlooked, that, beside the re-action on landlords, there was also at that time a strong re-action produced on the habit of labourers. With their growing taste for the new enjoyments which had been placed within their reach, there was, in order to obtain them, a willingness to forego the lounging and lazzaroni life which they formerly indulged in, and to brook the restraints and the toils of regular industry. A mighty extension must have arisen to agriculture, not merely from the new power that has been given to the implements of labour, but from the new habit that has been given to the labourers themselves. If they now work double of what they did formerly, then, all other circumstances being equal, the land last entered on will, in return for the same labour, only have to feed half of the number of agricultural labourers which it did formerly. It affords room for an immense enlargement, when, in virtue of this moral transition alone, the cultivation which stopped short at the land that, for a given amount of work, returned the subsistence of twenty families, may now be carried downward to a more barren and uncomplying soil, that, in return for the same work, yields but the subsistence of ten families. In this way too, then, have trade and manufactures widened the domain of cultivation; and the products of the former have stimulated and called forth in greater abundance the products of the latter.

16. It is thus that, by a more strenuous industry, and a more effective machinery together, the poorer soils may, to a certain extent, be forced to yield an equal, or, perhaps, a more liberal subsistence to the labourer, than at earlier stages in the process of cultivation. Yet it must be quite evident, that, whether in single countries, or in the whole world, it is a process which cannot go on indefinitely. The time may be indefinitely distant, and indeed may never come, when the absolute and impassable barrier shall at length be arrived at. But to be satisfied that there is such a barrier, one has only to look to the extent and quality of the land in any region of the earth. By labour we might grind even the naked rock into an arable soil,—but a soil thus formed never would return the expense of food bestowed upon the labourers. In every country there is an upland or outfield territory, which will always bid defiance to agriculture. And even though it were not so—though to its last acre it possessed a uniform richness—though the plough might be carried over the whole of the mighty continent, and should find an obstacle nowhere but at the margin of the sea; yet, as sure as that every country has its limit, and every continent its shore, we must acquiesce in it as one of the stern necessities of our condition, that the earth we tread upon, can only be made to yield a limited produce, and so to sustain a limited population.

17. It seems very generally admitted, that should it ever come to this, the population, brought to a stand in respect of numbers, must either have to encounter great positive distress, or must antici-

pate this distress by a preventive regimen. In the midst of all the minuter criticisms to which the doctrine has been exposed, the great historical fact remains unshaken—that, let the means of subsistence be increased however largely and suddenly, this is sure to be followed by a corresponding increase of population. Every state and country in the world bears evidence to this truth—whether in the steady augmentations of Europe, or in the gigantic strides that are now making in the population of America. The invariable connexion, as of antecedent and consequent, between a great extent of fertile and unoccupied land, and a great multiplication of families, when once it is entered upon, is too palpable to be obscured by any sophistry, or by the allegation of any mystic principle whatever. Yet the power to support, and the power to create a population, are just as distinct, the one from the other, as the constitution of the external world is distinct from the constitution or physiology of human nature. It is not an increase of the former power which gives rise to an increase of the latter—it only gives situation and space for the development of its energies. Should a population, when every let and hinderance of a straitened subsistence is removed, be able to double itself in fifteen years—it would still have the inherent ability of doing so, after that every acre on the face of the globe had been advanced to its state of uttermost cultivation. The power of population would then be kept in perpetual abeyance—with a constant disposition to transgress beyond the limits of the world's food, and as constant a check

on the expansion of the capabilities which belong to it.

18. All this is very generally allowed; but then the imagination of many is, that, not until the world be fully cultivated and fully peopled, shall we have any practical interest in the question. They seem to think of the doctrine of Malthus, that the consideration of it may, with all safety, be postponed, till the agriculture of every country and every clime have been carried to its extreme perfection; and that, meanwhile, the population may proceed as rapidly and recklessly as it may. When a household is straitened by its excessive numbers, or a parish is oppressed by its redundant families—they would bar every argument about the proximate causes of this inconvenience, by the allegation, that there were still thousands of unreclaimed acres at home, or millions in distant places of the earth, though of as little real or substantial consequence to the suffering parties, as if the land were situated in another planet. They appear to conceive, that ere any body can be felt as an obstacle to our progress, it must have come to a dead stand—not aware that to act as a check or impediment, it has only to move more slowly, though in the same direction, than at the rate in which we are advancing ourselves. They proceed on the idea, that no shock or collision can be felt but by the stroke of an impellent on a body at rest—whereas it is enough if the body be but moving at a tardier pace. In the one case, the strength of the collision would be estimated by the whole velocity—yet, in the other, there might still be a very hard collision, though

estimated only by a difference of velocities. It is thus that, for the continued pressure of the world's population on its food, it is far from necessary that the food should have reached that stationary maximum, beyond which it cannot be carried. It is enough, for this purpose, that the limit of the world's abundance, though it does recede, should recede more slowly than *would* the limit of the world's population. A pressure, and that a very severe one, may be felt for many ages together, from a difference in the mere tendencies of their increase. The man, who so runs as to break his head against a wall, might receive a severe contusion, even to the breaking of his head, if, instead of a wall, it had been a slowly-retiring barrier. And therefore we do not antedate matters, by taking up now the consideration of Malthus' preventive and positive checks to population. There is scarcely a period, even in the bygone history of the world, when the former checks have not been called for, and the latter have not been in actual operation. To postpone either the argument or its application till the agriculture of the world shall be perfected, is a most unpractical, as well as a most unintelligent view of the question—for long ere this distant consummation can be realized, and even now, may the obstacle of a slowly-retiring limit begin to be felt. The tendency of a progressive population to outstrip the progressive culture of the earth, may put mankind into a condition of straitness and difficulty—and that for many generations before the earth shall be wholly cultivated. We are not sure, but it may have done so from the

commencement of the race, and throughout all its generations. Certain it is, at all events, that the produce of the soil cannot be made to increase at the rate that population *would* increase. Neither mechanical invention, nor more intense manual labour, is sufficient for this purpose. On the supposition that the numbers of mankind were to increase up to their natural capability of increase, no human skill or human labour, though doing their uttermost, could suffice for raising a produce up to the population—nor will the mass of society ever be upheld in comfort, without the operation of certain other principles, by which to restrain the excess of the population over the produce.

19. The impotency of the one expedient, and efficacy of the other, are nowhere more convincingly exhibited, than along what may be termed, the extreme margin of cultivation. It is there where the lands pays no rent;* and, laying aside for the present, the consideration of profit, it is there where the produce that is reared can do no more than feed the labouring cultivators and their secondaries. But let the population increase to the extent of its own inherent power of increase, and it would force the existing limit of cultivation; or, in other words, flow over upon a soil inferior to that which had last been entered on, or inferior to that which, at the

* We are aware of a certain modification and minuter sort of controversy, to which the affirmation of the land absolutely paying no rent has given rise. We shall not stop to offer any adjustment on this matter, as it is in no way essential to the validity of our argument. See Mr Prinsep's note to his translation of Say's Political Economy, Vol. II. p. 168.—and Dr Hamilton on the Progress of Society.

then rate of enjoyment, could do no more than feed the labouring cultivators and their secondaries. The consequence of such a descent is inevitable. The rate of enjoyment must fall. The agricultural workmen must either submit to be worse fed than before; or, parting with so many of their secondaries, they must submit to be worse clothed, or lodged, or furnished than before. The likelihood is, that they would so proportion their sacrifices, as to suffer in both these ways—and so there behoved to be a general degradation of comfort in the working classes of society. There is, to be sure, another way in which they might possibly extract from the more ungrateful soil, on which they had just entered, the same plenty as before. They may submit to harder labour, by putting forth a more strenuous husbandry on the inferior land—but this too is degradation. Whether by an increase of drudgery, or an increase of destitution, there may, in either way, be a sore aggravation to the misery of labourers.

20. If it be not possible, then, to sustain in comfort and sufficiency the working classes, by keeping up the produce to the population, when suffered to proceed according to its own spontaneous energies—there seems only to be another alternative for the achievement of this great problem, that of keeping down the population to the produce. We know of no other right, or comfortable, or efficient way of doing this, than by the establishment of a habit and a principle among the labourers themselves. If they will in general enter recklessly into marriage, it is not possible to save a general descent

in their circumstances. By the operation of causes already explained, a population may flow onward, in the way of increase, from one age to another, without any abridgment on the comforts of our peasantry. When these are trenched upon, it is no longer a flow—but we should call it an overflow. And the only way, we apprehend, of preventing this overflow, with all its consequent wretchedness and crime, is by the formation of a higher taste for comfort and decency among the peasantry themselves. Marriage is not necessarily the effect of a headlong impulse; but may be a voluntary act, in the determination of which, prudence and forethought have had an influential share. It is evident, that the more we elevate man into a reflective being, and inspire him with self-respect, and give him a demand for larger and more refined accommodations, and, in one word, raise his standard of enjoyment—the more will the important step of marriage become a matter of deliberation and delay. There is the utmost difference, in this respect, between the man who is content to live on potatoes, and spend his days in a sordid hovel, and the man who aspires, and, indeed, will not be satisfied without that style of food, and furniture, and dress, which we find generally to obtain among a well-conditioned peasantry.*

* Mr T. Perronnet Thomson, in his able Tract on the "True Theory of Rent," has stated the effect of this difference with laconic felicity and force. "A labourer in Ireland will live and bring up a family on potatoes; a labourer in England will see the world unpeopled first."—"Englishmen have the physical capability of living on potatoes as much as other men, but fortunately they have not the habit; and though it might be wrong

There is a sense of character, as well as a taste for comfort, connected with this habit; and when these become general in a land, there is, of consequence, a most sure and salutary postponement in the average date of matrimony. In a newly-settled country, where there is much good land still unoccupied, the moral preventive check might not be called for. In an old country, where it is called for, but not observed, we are sure to behold a wretched and degraded peasantry. There is no other method by which to raise them above this level, or to prevent their falling into it, than by the vigorous operation of this check. Our peasantry, it should be understood by all, have in this way, though in this way only, their comfort and independence in their own hands. They are on high vantage-ground, if they but knew it; and it is the fondest wish of every enlightened philanthropist, that they should avail themselves to the uttermost of the position which they occupy. It is at the

to say they would starve first in their own proper persons, they will utterly refuse to multiply upon such diet, the effect of which on population is ultimately the same."—"The Englishman will not live and bring up a family on potatoes; because, though he may consent to live on them, when he can positively procure nothing else,—habit, custom, the opinion of those around him, have made it in his eyes contemptible, irrational, absurd, for a man to be living on potatoes, when he has the opportunity of getting any thing better. In his hours of prosperity, therefore, he will to a certainty solace himself with bacon, and most probably venture upon beef; and as this absorbs a greater portion of his income in what he views as necessary to his individual existence, it proportionally reduces his disposition to burthen himself with new mouths. If the Irishman had the prospect of all this bacon and beef, he would view it as convertible into potatoes for a family like a patriarch's. The Englishman thinks it but decency to swallow all, and omits the family."

bidding of their collective will, what the remuneration of labour shall be; for they have entire and absolute command over the supply of labour. If they will, by their rash and blindfold marriages, over-people the land, all the devices of human benevolence and wisdom cannot ward off from them the miseries of an oppressed and straitened condition. There is no possible help for them, if they will not help themselves. It is to a rise and reformation in the habits of our peasantry that we would look for deliverance, and not to the impotent crudities of a speculative legislation. Many are the schemes of amelioration at all times afloat. We hold, that, without the growth of popular intelligence and virtue, they will, every one of them, be ineffectual. This will at length save the country from the miseries of a redundant population,—and this, we apprehend, to be the great, the only specific for its worst moral and its worst political disorders.

21. It is not, however, by a direct promulgation of the doctrines of Mr Malthus, that the people will be converted to the side of their own interest. We can imagine nothing more preposterous than the diffusion, for this purpose, of tracts on population among the families of the land. The change will be accomplished surely, though indirectly, and by insensible progress, through the means of general instruction, or by the spread of common, and more especially of sound Christian education over the country. There is an indissoluble connexion between the moral character and the economic comfort of a peasantry; and the doctrine of Malthus is the *vinculum* by which to explain it. But it is

not necessary to point out the vinculum to them. To make good the effect, it is not at all necessary that they should understand its dependence upon the cause. It is enough, if, in the state of their own principles and feelings, they present or provide the cause. Let them only be a well-taught and moralized people; and, in that proportion, will they mix prudence and calculation and foresight, with every step in the history of their lives. The desirable effect will follow without any theory, or any anticipation of theirs. Let it, on the average, be held disreputable to marry without a fair and adequate prospect or provision; and the result would be a certain average of later marriages, or a country less burdened with an excess of population. It is thus, that half a century ago, in the Lowlands of Scotland, the habit of a large preparation often required, for its accomplishment, the delay of years after the virtuous attachment was formed—this habit was nearly universal among our well-schooled and well-ordered families. And so, though poverty was not unknown, yet pauperism was unknown; and notwithstanding the general barrenness of our soil, did the moral prevail over the physical causes, and uphold within our borders an erect and independent peasantry. They exemplified the doctrine of Malthus, and realized its benefits, long before that doctrine was propounded to the world.

22. In the mechanism of human society, it needs not, that, to effectuate a given result, the people, who do in fact bring it about, should be able intelligently to view their own part in it. This is

not more necessary in truth, than that, to fulfil the beneficent ends of the planetary system, its various parts should be endued with consciousness—that the satellites of Jupiter, for example, should understand and design their own movements. The multitude may be wholly innocent of economical science themselves—yet may they exemplify, and by their agency sustain, its most wholesome processes. They may realize the full benefits of an operation which they do not comprehend—though, in very deed, they were themselves the operators. We object not to the highest possible education of the peasantry—yet it is not to the lessons of the political, but to those of the moral and religious school, that we look for the best and speediest instruments of their economic well-being. Neither teachers nor taught may understand this connexion—nor is it necessary they should. The main object and the collateral good of Christianity may be indissolubly conjoined—but there are thousands who have verified this conjunction in experience, though they have never viewed it in theory. In labouring for the good of their eternity, they have reaped, by the way, those blessings which religion so abundantly sheds over the pilgrimage that leads to it.

23. All the remedies which have been proposed against a state of general destitution in society, may be classified under two descriptions. By the first, it is sought to provide the adequate means for the increasing numbers of mankind. By the second, to keep down the numbers to the stationary, or, comparatively speaking, to the slowly-increasing

means. The first may, we think, be conveniently designated the external remedies—insomuch as their object is to equalize the means with the population, by an increase on the former term, or by an increase and enlargement of the resources from without. The second may, perhaps, be contradistinguished from the other, by viewing it in the light of an internal remedy—insomuch as its object is to maintain the equality of the two, by preventing an undue increase on the latter term, which can only be achieved, in a right way, by adding to the restraints of prudence and principle from within. It is our main design to demonstrate the insufficiency of one and all the remedies put together which belong to the first class—and to contrast with their operation, the effect of the moral remedy, the prosperous economic state that will surely be realized through the medium of general intelligence and virtue, or by an action on the minds of the people themselves.

Note.

The reader who is conversant in the most esteemed works on Political Economy, will, if he concur in the leading principle of this chapter, know how to modify the conclusion of Dr Adam Smith, who, in his observations on the advancing and stationary and declining state of a country, seems to reason as if at length a progressive deterioration in the circumstances of the great body of the people, was an almost unavoidable result in

the march of human society. There is much in Ricardo to countenance the same melancholy anticipation; and it is only by bringing the Theory of Wealth into contact with the Theory of Population, that the anticipation can be reversed and rectified. By the indefinite control, which the collective mind and habit of society have over the element of Population, the general standard of enjoyment in a country is capable of being indefinitely raised; and this is of capital importance to be attended to, in studying the connexion between the moral character and the economic comfort of a people.

CHAPTER II.

On the Increase and Limit of Employment.

1. The great and immediate demand is for the application of the external remedies; and, till these have done their uttermost, the feeling is, that the application of the internal is meanwhile uncalled for. So long, it is imagined, as there are still unevoked any possible resources from without, it is yet time to think of a restraint from within. It is readily admitted, that, as cultivation is carried downward through the gradation of soils, the last which has been entered on does no more, in the existing state of our agriculture, than barely remunerate the operations of its husbandry—or, laying capital at present out of the account, than feed the agricultural labourers and their secondaries. And it is farther granted, that, if the last possible limit is ever to be reached, the tendency of the population to increase must either be corrected by the positive, or kept in by the preventive checks; and that, were the operation of the moral preventive check sufficiently powerful, there might, even in the ultimate state of the world's agriculture, be as high, or a more highly-conditioned peasantry, than at any preceding stage of the world's history. But it is not seen, that, long anterior to this consummation, the moral preventive check may be imperiously called for, in order to sustain the comfort and circumstances of the working population. Never

theless, this moral restraint is desirable *now*, as well as *then ;* and that just because the tendency to an increase in the number of labourers far outstrips the tendency to an increase in the productive powers of labour. It is quite true, that, by the inventions of machinery, and the improvements which are ever taking place, both in the methods of agriculture, and the implements of agricultural labour, the poorer soils may, for an indefinitely long period, be made to yield as much, in return for the same work, as did their predecessor soils in the series of cultivation. Yet there is nothing in this to supersede the moral restraint—and precisely because, with every possible enlargement, subsistence *will* not increase, so fast as population *would* increase. And therefore it is, that, notwithstanding all which may be alleged of the still unexhausted capabilities of the soil, either in this or in any other country of the world, we cannot possibly be saved from the *present* and the perpetual miseries of a redundant population, but by a higher taste for the comforts and the decencies of life among the population themselves. This, by its controlling effect on the date of marriage, and so on the largeness and number of rising families, keeps up the price of labour, by keeping down the supply of it in the labour market. This we hold to be the great specific for ensuring a high average style of comfort and enjoyment among our peasantry—nor do we regard it as a less wise and beautiful connexion in the mechanism of society, that the most direct way to establish it is through the medium of popular intelligence and virtue—giving thereby a

practical importance to efficient Christian instruction, unknown to the most of economists, and which no mere economist can possibly realize.

2. But though the progress of cultivation, and the produce extracted by labourers from the last and farthest margin of it, do truly represent both the progress in numbers, and the state in respect to comfort, of our operative population;* and though, when viewed in this way, the conclusion seems irresistible, that there is a slowly-receding limit to the means of subsistence, on which population is ever pressing, so that if it press too hardly, it must straiten and depress the condition of labourers—yet we hear of a thousand other expedients for an amelioration in the state of the working classes of society, beside the only effectual expedient of a general principle and prudence in regard to marriages, which it is for the working classes of society, and them alone, to put into operation. What gives plausibility to these expedients is, that society is so exceedingly complicated a thing;†

* The produce extracted by that portion of our labourers who are employed at the extreme margin of cultivation, will, after a deduction for profit and taxes, truly represent and measure the general state of comfort among the operative population at large; because an inferiority of condition cannot long subsist between one class of labourers and another, there being a constant tendency to equalization, by the free movements of individual labourers from the employment that is worse remunerated, to the employment that is better.

† It has been well remarked by Malthus, in his Essay on Population, that the largeness and complication of a society tend to obscure the truth upon this subject:—

"Norway is, I believe, almost the only country in Europe where a traveller will hear any apprehensions expressed of a redundant population, and where the danger to the happiness of the lower classes of people, from this cause, is in some degree seen and understood. This obviously arises from the smallness

insomuch that, when viewed in some one aspect, it holds out a promise of improvement or relief, which, under another or more comprehensive aspect,

of the population altogether, and the consequent narrowness of the subject. If our attention were confined to one parish, and there were no power of emigrating from it, the most careless observer could not fail to remark, that, if all married at twenty, it would be perfectly impossible for the farmers, however carefully they might improve their land, to find employment and food for those that would grow up; but when a great number of these parishes are added together in a populous kingdom, the largeness of the subject, and the power of moving from place to place, obscure and confuse our view. We lose sight of a truth which before appeared completely obvious; and, in a most unaccountable manner, attribute to the aggregate quantity of land, a power of supporting people beyond comparison greater than the sum of all its parts."—"From the small number of people, and the little variety of employment, the subject is brought distinctly within the view of each individual; and he must feel the absolute necessity of repressing his inclinations to marriage till a vacancy offer."—"In countries more fully peopled, this subject is always involved in great obscurity. Each man naturally thinks that he has as good a chance of finding employment as his neighbour, and that if he fail in one place he shall succeed in some other. He marries, therefore, and trusts to fortune; and the effect too frequently is, that the redundant population, occasioned in this manner, is repressed by the positive checks o poverty and disease. In Norway, the subject is not involved in the same obscurity. The number of additional families, which the increasing demand for labour will support, is more distinctly marked. The population is so small, that even in the towns it is difficult to fall into any considerable error on this subject; and in the country, the division and improvement of an estate, and the creation of a greater number of housemen's places, must be a matter of complete notoriety. If a man can obtain one of these places he marries, and is able to support a family; if he cannot obtain one, he remains single. A redundant population is thus prevented from taking place, instead of being destroyed after it has taken place."—"There are no large manufacturing towns, to take off the overflowing population of the country; and as each village naturally furnishes from itself a supply of hands more than equal to the demand, a change of place in search of work seldom promises any success. Unless, therefore, an opportunity of foreign emigration offer, the Norwegian peasant generally remains in the village in which he was born; and as the vacancies in houses and employments must occur very slowly,

is seen to be quite illusory. For example, when one witnesses the vast diversity of trades or employments in society, by each of which, or at least in the prosecution of which, so many thriving families are supported, then it is conceived, that the highway for the relief of the unprovided is to find them a trade, to find them employment. Or, when looking to the connexion between capital and labour, and perceiving that the office of the former is to maintain the latter—then, on the idea that capital may, by the operation of parsimony and good management, be extended *ad infinitum*, is it held, by almost every economist of high name, that every accumulation of capital carries an addition along with it to the subsistence of labourers. Or again, when one looks to the multitudes supported by foreign trade, in all its departments, the imagination is, that, as agriculture has its capabilities, so commerce has its distinct and additional capabilities; and that, whatever limit there may be to the power of the one for the maintenance of families, this is amply made up by the indefinite extension which might be given to the other. Again, we often hear taxation vaguely, though confidently talked of, as the great incubus on the prosperity of labourers; and that, if this were only lightened or removed, there would thenceforth ensue a mighty enlargement both of industry and comfort to the families of the working classes. And then, in the

owing to the small mortality that takes place, he will often see himself compelled to wait a considerable time before he can attain a situation which will enable him to rear a family."

These extracts are all taken from the chapter on the "Checks to Population in Norway."

list of national grievances, we hear of the enormous and overgrown properties which are vested in the few—and a general abundance diffused among the many is figured to be the consequence that would result, if not from the spoliation and forcible division of this wealth, at least from the abolition of entails, and of the law of primogeniture. Or in the absence, perhaps the failure, of all the expedients, emigration is held forth as a sovereign specific for all the distresses of an overcrowded land. And, lastly, after every thing but the moral habit of labourers themselves has been thought of, there follows, in this list of artifices for their relief, a scheme which, no longer existing in fancy, has been bodied forth into actual operation, and is the one of all others most directly fitted to undermine the principle and prudence of labourers—even a compulsory tax on the wealthy for the relief of the destitute, so as to disarm poverty of its terrors, and proclaim a universal impunity for dissipation and idleness. Now that this last great expedient has been adverted to, we need scarcely advert to any of those lesser ones, which, though but the crudities of mere sentimentalism, have been proposed, each as a grand panacea, for all the disorders of the social state,—such as the cottage system, and the cow system, and the village economy of Mr Owen, and the various plans of home-colonization that have been thought to supersede the lessons of Malthus, or, at least, practically to absolve us from all regard to them for centuries to come.

3. Now the remedies we have just specified, may be regarded as belonging to the first class. They

are all external remedies; and it will be our distinct aim, to demonstrate, in succession, the inefficacy of each of them. There is not one of them that will serve as a measure of permanent relief. In as far as they hold out the promise of an indefinite harbourage for an ever-increasing population, they but practise a deceitful mockery on the hopes of the philanthropist. To whichever of the quarters now specified we may, with fond expectation, turn ourselves, we shall speedily be met by a check in every way as difficult to force, as is the last limit between cultivation and barrenness. *To this limit, in fact, one and all of them may be reduced*—and just as really, though not so obviously, in Britain as in Norway. In every society of complicated structure and widely-diversified interests, many are the distinct propositions that might be offered for enlarging the sustenance and comfort of the human species. They can all, however apparently remote and various among themselves, be brought to the place at which husbandry ceases from her operations, because no longer profitable; and there the merits of each may be tried and pronounced upon. That is the place, in fact, though but recently adverted to in the science of political economy, where many a question can be decided, which involves the greatest earthly hopes and interests of society.

4. It may be thought, however, that, without proceeding further in our argument, we might pronounce at once on the scheme of home-colonization. And we trust it is abundantly obvious, that it is utterly incompetent to the end of providing indefinite sustenance for a population proceeding

without restraint in the increase of its own numbers. If there be any sanguine enough to imagine, that cultivation may be so speeded forward beyond its natural rate, under the auspices of government, as to absorb all the redundancies of a population, whom the scheme itself may have helped to emancipate from the checks that would otherwise have restrained them—we would appeal to the mighty enlargement which has taken place in our own land within these few years—the millions which have been added to the inhabitants of Britain and Ireland within the lapse of a single generation. The progress of agriculture during this period, from individual enterprise alone, is quite obvious; and it satisfactorily accounts for the commensurate increase that has taken place in the population. And yet, though a larger, is it a more comfortable population than before? Has the increase of food worked out any sensible increase on the average sufficiency of families? Have not the absolute plenty in the land, and the relative poverty of the people who live in it, kept pace the one with the other? And if this be all the result of that progress in our husbandry which has taken place under the enterprise of individuals, and has afforded room for additional millions of human beings—can we anticipate a more prosperous result from any government enterprise, which at best will but afford room and sustenance for as many additional thousands? The history of the last thirty years may well demonstrate, that, with a mighty enlargement in our means of subsistence, the population may retrograde, or at least be stationary, in point of

comfort, notwithstanding. It affords the clearest experimental proof of the little which can be done by mere resources for an increasing population, without restraints on the rate of their increase. There was nothing in the vast augmentation which has recently taken place of the one, that superseded the use or necessity for the other. And still less ought it to be superseded by any paltry augmentation of the means *ab extra*, which can be looked for from the scheme in question. The philosophy of Malthus, or rather, the practical wisdom of families, ought not to be suspended, till home-colonization have made full development of the capabilities which belong to it. A reckless population, made more reckless by the show and promise of such a relief, will shoot ahead of all that can possibly be achieved by it. The additional food that may have been created, will be more than overborne in the tide of an increasing population. The only difference will be a greater instead of a smaller number of wretched families—a heavier amount of distress, with less of unbroken ground in reserve for any future enlargements—a society in every way as straitened as before, yet nearer to the extreme limit of their resources than before—in short, a condition, at once of augmented hardship and diminished hope, with all the burden of an expensive and unprofitable scheme to the bargain.

5. We cannot complete our view of the system of home-colonization, without the help of certain ulterior principles, which we shall afterwards apply to the further consideration of this scheme. We shall therefore enter immediately on the proper

subject of our present chapter; which is, the increase and limit of employment.

6. But before we commence this attempt, it will be necessary to premise a general view of the manner in which the distribution of the labouring classes is regulated by the state of landed property; and to show how a distinct class of labourers, additional to the agricultural and secondary, arises in the progress of cultivation, and increases in number with every descent which it makes among the inferior soils. Hitherto we have only been attending to the limit of cultivation, where, at the soils last entered upon, the produce is barely adequate to the expenses of the husbandry; or, abstracting still from the consideration of profit, where the produce could do no more than feed the agricultural labourers and their secondaries. But the produce of the superior soils is more than adequate to this object. The same improvement in agriculture, in virtue of which we now draw a full subsistence for its labourers, from land that had long lain beyond the outskirts of cultivation, will enable us to draw from the fertile land, that had long lain within its boundary, a greater surplus of produce than before, over and above the expenses of the farm management. It is this surplus which constitutes rent,—which, generally speaking, is *measured* by the difference between the produce of a given quantity of labour on any soil, and the produce of the same labour on the soil that yields no rent. It goes in the shape of revenue to the landlord; who either receives it in kind, or receives in money the power of purchasing it—a power

which, in the act of expenditure, he transfers in various parts throughout the year, to those who labour in his service, or who minister in various ways to his accommodation.*

7. Now, it is this expenditure on the part of landlords, which gives rise to another class of labourers, beside the two that we have already specified. Should the rent but enable the proprietor to provide himself with the necessaries of life—then that part of it, which goes to purchase the first necessaries, would but serve to subsist an idle man instead of a labourer; and that part of it which went to the purchase of second necessaries, would but serve to discharge additional maintenance, and so give additional extent to the secondary population. But such is the unequal distribution of landed property, and so large are the shares which fall in general to the possessors, that, in the vast majority of instances, the rent can do a great deal more than uphold the proprietor in the necessaries of life. It can enable him to subsist better, and to lodge and clothe himself better than an ordinary workman. He can afford to indulge in the luxuries of life: and the preparation of these constitutes the employment of a very large population. It will be found very convenient to distinguish them by a particular name, even though we should not for this purpose fix on the best appellation. We conceive that the fittest term by which to characterize them, is one descriptive of a circumstance in which their employment differs from that of the two first classes. The two first classes

* See Appendix, Note A.—On the Rent of Land.

are employed in the preparation of articles which cannot be dispensed with—the preparation of the first and second necessaries of life. The others are employed in the preparation of articles which can be dispensed with. A man can want luxuries —he cannot want necessaries. He might forego luxuries altogether; and so dismiss from his service the whole of this third class, who are employed in preparing them. Or, he might commute one set of luxuries for another; and so, without dismissing them from his service, he might at least shift their employment in that service. It is this liability of being transferred from one employment to another, and this power, on the part of their employers, of dispensing, if they choose to make a surrender of their luxuries, with their services altogether, which has led me to affix to this class the title of the *disposable*. They form the disposable population, in contradistinction to the agricultural and the secondary.

8. It is for the sake of defining, and not of stigmatising, that we speak of luxuries. By this term we would comprehend every thing prepared by human labour, and which enters not into the average maintenance of labourers. The landed proprietor must at least have the food of other men—but, in as far as, in style and in quality, it is above that of common labourers, he indulges in luxuries; and so there are cooks and confectionaries, and many others employed in preparing delicacies for the table, who should have their place assigned to them among the disposable population. He must be lodged as well as other men; but then, in as far

as his house exceeds in magnitude and elegance that of an ordinary workman, for that excess, he must have an additional service of masons, and carpenters, and roofers, and smiths, who, in respect of their contributing to this higher style, belong not to the secondary but to the disposable population. He must be provided also with furniture and clothing, up to the degree of comfort and tastefulness which prevail among the common people—but, in as far as additional labourers are required, for upholding a higher tastefulness, or a greater abundance, there is a host of tradesmen, and artificers, tailors, and shoemakers, and upholsterers, and cabinet-makers, who must be classified in thousands with the disposable population. We shall not attempt to enumerate the exceeding diversity of employments, which the taste, and the humour, and the artificial wants, and the wayward appetency of the landed proprietors give rise to. It is mainly they who impress on the industry of the disposable population, any direction which seemeth unto them good; and who, by spending among them their rents, or, in other words, by making over to them the surplus produce of their estates, (or, which is the same thing, by transferring to them the power of purchasing that produce,) do, in return for their varied services, effuse maintenance upon their families. This disposable population must, like the agricultural, have a train of secondaries attached to them; and receive as much from their employers as shall provide themselves with the first necessaries, and as shall suffice for the food of those who provide them with the second necessaries of

life. It is not enough that the disposable population are *subsisted*—this would only imply their being fed by their employers. They must be *maintained*, which, in addition to their being fed, implies their being clothed, and lodged, and furnished, in all those secondary accommodations that enter into the average comfort of labourers. The price of their services includes in it the power of purchasing food for themselves, and food for all the secondary labourers who, either mediately or immediately, are employed by them.

9. This completes our view of the distribution which takes place in society of the labouring classes. The agricultural population are employed in providing all with the first necessaries of life. The secondary population, in providing all with the second necessaries of life. And the disposable population, in providing all who are elevated above the condition of labourers with the higher comforts of life, its luxuries, its elegancies, which are not essential to the maintenance of human beings, but minister to the wealthy an endless diversity of gratifications, and give rise to a like diversity of employments among the people. It is needless to explain here, how it is that the wages of labour, in all the three classes, are nearly equalized—insomuch, that they who are toiling at the extreme margin of cultivation, and there trying to force a return from soils which had never been attempted before, are equally remunerated for their services, with those who, in the walks of busy artisanship, are ministering to the most refined enjoyments of the wealthiest and the noblest in our land. For

this, and for many other doctrines which we presuppose, without any exhibition of their proof, we must satisfy ourselves with a reference to the general science of political economy.

10. Here, however, we cannot refrain from observing the connexion which obtains between the state of the soil and the state of human society. Had no ground yielded more in return for the labour expended on it, than the food of the cultivators and their secondaries, the existence of one and all of the human race would have been spent in mere labour. Every man would have been doomed to a life of unremitting toil for his bodily subsistence; and none could have been supported in a state of leisure, either for idleness, or for other employments, than those of husbandry, and such coarser manufactures, as serve to provide society with the second necessaries of existence. The species would have risen but a few degrees, whether physical or moral, above the condition of mere savages. It is just because of a fertility in the earth, by which it yields a surplus over and above the food of the direct and secondary labourers, that we can command the services of a disposable population, who, in return for their maintenance, minister to the proprietors of this surplus, all the higher comforts and elegancies of life. It is precisely to this surplus we owe it, that society is provided with more than a coarse and a bare supply for the necessities of animal nature. It is the original fund out of which are paid the expenses of art, and science, and civilization, and luxury, and law, and defence, and all, in short, that con-

tributes either to strengthen or to adorn the commonwealth. Without this surplus, we should have had but an agrarian population—consisting of husbandmen, and those few homely and rustic artificers, who, scattered in hamlets over the land, would have given their secondary services to the whole population. It marks an interesting connexion between the capabilities of the soil and the condition of social life, that to this surplus we stand indispensably indebted, for our crowded cities, our thousand manufactories for the supply of comforts and refinements to society, our wide and diversified commerce, our armies of protection, our schools and colleges of education, our halls of legislation and justice, even our altars of piety and temple services. It has been remarked by geologists, as the evidence of a presiding design in nature, that the waste of the soil is so nicely balanced by the supply from the disintegration of the upland rocks, which are worn and pulverized at such a rate, as to keep up a good vegetable mould on the surface of the earth. But each science teems with the like evidences of a devising and intelligent God; and when we view aright the many beneficent functions, to which, through the instrumentality of its surplus produce, the actual degree of the earth's fertility is subservient, we cannot imagine a more wondrous and beautiful adaptation between the state of external nature and the mechanism of human society.

11. By this mechanism of human society, as far as we have explained it, the exceeding diversity of trades and employments may be accounted for.

Even were the barrenness of the land such, that it only yielded food for an agricultural and a secondary population—this distribution would of itself give rise to a considerable variety of distinct occupation; and, under the system of a division in labour, we should have shoemakers, and tailors, and weavers, and masons, and carpenters, and artificers in hardware, and dealers, as well as fabricators, in sundry more articles—making out, on the whole, a pretty copious enumeration of separate callings, with the separate interests belonging to them. But when, in addition to the subsistence of an agricultural and a secondary, there is fertility in the land for the subsistence of a disposable population, the multiplication of trades and employments is thereby indefinitely extended—being as numerous as the caprices of human fancy and taste, or the varieties of human indulgence. It is thus that, in proportion as the mechanism of social life becomes more complex, it is also all the more bewildering; and, amid the intricacy of its manifold combinations, we lose sight both of the springs and the limits of human maintenance. One very wide and prevalent delusion, more especially, and which has misguided both the charity of philanthropists and the policy of statesmen, is, that the employment in which men are engaged is the source of their maintenance,—whereas, it is only the channel through which they draw that maintenance from the hands of those who buy the products of their employment. This principle has in it all the simplicity of a truism—and yet it is wonderful with what perversity of apprehension, both the managers

of a state and the managers of a parish miss the sight of it. Whether we look to acts of parliament, or to the actings of a parochial vestry—we shall find them proceeding on its being the grand specific for the relief of the poor, to find employment for them. Now, unless that employment be the raising of food, it does nothing to alleviate the disproportion between the numbers of the people and the means of their subsistence,—and if there be a limit, as we have already demonstrated, to the food, we may be very sure that this device of employment will not turn out a panacea for the distresses of an overburdened land.

12. But the fallacy to which we now advert, is not confined to the matters of practical administration. It may also be recognised in the theories of those who have attempted to adjust the philosophy of the subject. In political economy it will often be found, that the channel is confounded with the source,—and hence a delusion, not in the business of charity alone, but which has extended far and wide among the lessons of the science.

13. And yet it is a delusion which, one might think, should be dissipated by but one step of explanation. A single truism puts it to flight. Nothing appears more obvious, than that *any trade or manufacture originates only its own products.* All that a stocking-maker contributes to society is simply stockings. This, and nothing more, is what comes forth of his establishment. And the same is true of all the other trades or employments which can be specified. They work off nothing, they emit nothing but their own peculiar articles.

Were this sure and ample axiom but clearly and steadfastly kept in view, it would put to flight a number of illusions in political science,—illusions which have taken obstinate hold of our legislators, and which to this moment keep firm possession in the systems of many of our economists. They almost all, in a greater or less degree, accredit a manufacture with something more than its own products. The inclination is, to accredit it also with the maintenance of its labourers. In every transaction of buying and selling, there are two distinct elements,—the commodity, and the price of the commodity; of which price, the maintenance of the labourers is generally far the largest ingredient. Now, the thing to be constantly kept in view is, that a manufacture should only be accredited with its own commodity, and not, over and above this, with the price of its commodity. These two stand, as it were, on different sides of an exchange. To the manufacture is to be ascribed all that we behold on the one side. It furnishes the commodity for the market. But it did not also create the wealth that supplies the price of the commodity. It does not furnish society with both itself and its equivalent. The latter comes from a distinct quarter; and we repeat, that by confounding, in imagination, two things which are distinct in fact, a false direction has been given, both to the policy of states, and to the theories of philosophers.

14. This confusion of sentiment appears in a variety of ways. When one sees a thriving and industrious village, and that the employment of

the families secures for them their maintenance, it is most natural to invest the former with a power of command, tantamount to a power of creation over the latter. The two go together; and because when the employment ceases, the maintenance ceases, it is conceived of the former, that in the order of causation it has the precedency. We affirm of a shawl-making village, that all which it yields to society is shawls. We accredit it with this, but with nothing more. But it is accredited with a great deal more, by those who talk in lofty style of our manufacturing interests, and the dependence thereupon of a nation's support and a nation's greatness. We hold, that if, through the exhaustion of the raw material, or any other cause, there were to be an extinction of the employment, the country would only be deprived of its wonted supply of shawls; but the prevalent imagination is, that the country would be deprived of its wonted support for so many hundred families. The whole amount of the mischief, in our estimation, would be the disappearance of shawls; in theirs, it would be the disappearance of that which upheld an integral part of the country's population. It is forgotten, that though shawls may no longer be produced or brought to market, the price that wont to be paid for them is still in reserve, and ready to be expended by the purchasers on some other article of accommodation or luxury. The circumstances which have brought the manufacture to ruin, do not affect the ability of those who consumed the products of the manufacture. The employment is put an end to; but the maintenance

comes from another quarter, and can be discharged in as great abundance as before, on as large a population. Their employment in making shawls was not the source of their maintenance; it was only the channel by which they drew it to their homes. The destruction or stoppage of the channel does not infer a stoppage at the source; that will find for itself another channel, through which all that enters into the maintenance of our industrious families might be effused upon them as liberally as before. We dispute not the temporary evils of the transition. We allow that a change of employment may bring individual and temporary distress along with it. But we contend, that the expenditure of those who support our disposable population will not be lessened, but only shifted, by this new state of things; and that, after the change is accomplished in the direction of their industry, we should behold as numerous a society as ever, upheld with the same liberality in every thing (with the single exception of shawls, and the substitution of some other luxury in their place) that enters into the comfort and convenience of families.

15. But we are further persuaded, that the confusion of sentiment which we are now attempting to expose, has had a most misleading effect on the views and the policy of statesmen: at one time, inspiring a false hope on the promised extension of trade and manufactures; and, at another time, creating a false alarm on the appearance of their decay. Our legislators do ascribe a higher function to trade and manufactures, than that of simply

furnishing society with the articles manufactured. They conceive of them as the dispensers of a transcendently greater benefit than the mere use and enjoyment of these articles. There are other and nobler interests associated in their minds with the trade and manufactures of the country, than the mere gratification and convenience which individuals have in the use of their products. This will at once be evident, if we resolve the manufacturing interest into its several parts,—as the shawl-making interest, wherewith our senate would not for a moment concern themselves, if they thought that all which hinged upon it was the supply of shawls—nor the stocking-making interest, if in their opinion nothing else depended on it but the supply of stockings—nor the carpet-making interest, if it involved no other or higher consideration than the supply of carpets—nor the buckle-making interest, if they did not suppose that, beside owing to it the supply of buckles, we furthermore owed the maintenance and wealth of buckle-makers. And the remark may be extended from manufactures to commerce.* We should have had no grave deliberations on the China trade, or the Portuguese trade, or the West India trade, if something far loftier had not been associated with these respective processes, than that of serving the families of the land with tea, or wine, or oranges, or sugar, or coffee, or tobacco. These

* In extending the observation from home to foreign trade, we pre-suppose, what we shall afterwards attempt to show more particularly, that the *terminus ad quem* of foreign trade, is the benefit, or enjoyment, administered by the commodities which it imports, to the inland consumers.

mighty commercial interests are conceived to be productive of something greatly more magnificent and national; and not only the income of all the capitalists, and the maintenance of all the labourers engaged in them, but the strength, and revenue, and political greatness of the state, are somehow associated with their defence and preservation. It is forgotten, of each trade and each manufacture, that it furnishes, and can furnish, nothing but its own proper and peculiar articles; and that, abstracting from the use and enjoyment of these, every other associated benefit is comprehended in the equivalent price which is paid for them. All that the wine trade of Portugal, for example, furnishes to our nation is wine; and, in reference either to the public revenue which arises from it, or to the private revenue wherewith it both enriches the capitalists, and supports the labourers employed in it, these are yielded, not most assuredly by the wine, but by the price given for the wine. The wine trade is but the channel through which these flow, and not the source in which they originate. But, notwithstanding, there is yet a mystic power ascribed to the wine trade, as if part of the nation's glory and the nation's strength were linked with the continuance of it. And hence a legislature tremulously alive to the state of our relations with Portugal, lest the wine trade should be destroyed. Now though, from the interruption of these relations, or from any other cause, the wine trade, on the one side, were destroyed, the counterpart wealth, on the other side, would not be destroyed. It would remain

with its owners, to be expended by them on the purchase of some new luxury in place of the wine; by the natural price of which, the same return could be made to capitalists and labourers, and by a tax on which, the same revenue might be secured to government as before.

16. It must be obvious, that employment in agriculture is not an indefinite resource for an indefinite population—seeing that it must stop short at the land which refuses to yield the essential food of its direct and secondary labourers. And it should be equally obvious, that as little is employment in manufactures an indefinite resource—seeing that the definite quantity of food raised can only sustain a certain and definite number of labourers. The latter position seems, on the first announcement, to carry its own evidence along with it; yet there is a certain subtle imagination in its way, which we have attempted to dispose of. Our argument rests on the veriest truism—that a manufacture is creative of nothing beyond its own products. But truism though it is, it has been strangely overlooked, not only in the devices of the charitable, but both in the policy of statesmen, and in the doctrinal schemes of the economists. Yet we think a sufficient explanation can be given, both of the manner in which the perverse misconception at first arose, and of the obstinacy wherewith it still lingers and keeps its ground amongst us.

17. In opposition, then, to the principle, that employment is creative of nothing but its own products, it might be alleged, that the presentation of

these products excites a desire for the acquisition of them, and so stimulates other employments in the fabrication of new products, to be given in exchange for the former ones. This was remarkably exemplified throughout the whole of Europe, at the termination of the middle ages. Of this we have a masterly sketch by Dr Adam Smith, in his Wealth of Nations;* when he traces the great economic change which took place, in virtue of a new taste and a new habit on the part of the landholders. Historically, it was the presentation to their notice of those articles of splendour and luxury which manufactures had produced, and which commerce brought to their doors, that prompted the change. This was the moving force, which shifted their old expenditure, and gave another direction to it. They dismissed their idle retainers, and appropriated the surplus produce by which they had been fed, to the purchase of luxuries in dress, or of luxuries in equipage and furniture. They furnished subsistence to as many as before, but in a new capacity, and in return for a different service. The disposable population were differently disposed of. Instead of so many idle marauders, living, save at their seasons of warfare, in sloth and sordidness, on the domain of their feudal lord, they were transmuted into orderly, industrious citizens—as dependent, for the first necessaries of life, on the country as before, but yielding, in return for these, not the homage of their personal attendance, but the tangible produce of their own

* And by Dr Robertson, in the Introduction to his History of Charles V.

handiwork. And along with this economic, there was effected a great moral change in the state of society. The contests of violence between adjoining proprietors, were exchanged for the more peaceful contests and rivalships of vanity. The hundreds, who in other days would have followed them to the field, on services of revenge or plunder, were now at peaceful occupation in their workshops—congregated into villages, which grew into cities, and there placed under the protection of law and social order. Liberty, and justice, and civilization, and right government, all emerged from this altered condition of things; and when we reflect, that commerce was the prime mover in this great transition, by the new desires which it infused, and the change which it effected in the style of living and habit of our landlords—it must be allowed, that, historically, to commerce we owe benefits of a much higher order, than the mere gratification of any of the physical or inferior appetencies of our nature.

18. But there is still another reason (beside the new direction given to the expenditure of land lords) why commerce might be said to have been creative at that period of more than their own immediate products. When the landlords parted with their idle retainers, and they were compelled to be industrious for their livelihood—along with a new habit of indulgence among the proprietors, there sprung up a new habit of industry among the people. At one and the same time, the proprietors became more luxurious than before, and the people became more laborious than before. Even these latter par-

ticipated to some degree in the taste of their superiors, and were willing also to make their sacrifices, that they might be admitted to their own humble share in those recent gratifications which were beginning to be placed too within reach of the peasantry, and were every-where raising the standard of enjoyment. They accordingly made sacrifice of their indolence and love of ease, even as the grandees above them made sacrifice of their power and parade of attendance. At the same time, the rights of all were beginning to be more recognised and respected; and, under the administration of more benign and equitable laws, the poor man felt a greater stimulus to labour than before, in the greater security which he now had for the possession and enjoyment of its fruits. And then the severe and regular industry of manufactures, was followed by a more severe and regular industry than heretofore in agriculture. The desire of each man to better his condition, now began to develop its energies in all the classes of society. Landlords, with a larger and juster sense of their interests, disposed of their farms in the way that yielded the greatest revenue to themselves; and husbandmen, with the benefit of a now more industrious peasantry, so laboured the farms, as to work out the greatest remainder of produce for themselves. In addition to this, the business of the country participated, though never to such a degree, with the business of towns, in the benefits that result from the division of labour, and in the greater power given by mechanical invention to the implements of labour. Altogether, the limit of cul-

tivation, under the operation of these various causes, has receded an immense way back within these three centuries. Millions of acres, that, under the old lazzaroni system, had never been entered on, are now yielding subsistence to man; and the increase of food has been surely and speedily followed up by an increase of population. The land of inferior soils, that formerly yielded nothing, is now productive; and the land that formerly produced, is now, in virtue of deeper and more laborious culture, of tenfold greater fertility than before. Now, in Europe, all this may be in a great measure traced to the reaction of commerce upon agriculture. It was commerce which gave the impulse; and, in addition to its own products, it, through the medium of the new system of society which it introduced, called forth products from the earth, that, but for it, might never have been extracted. In this instance at least, commerce seems to have been the creator, not of its own commodities alone, but of the equivalents for these commodities—a fountain-head, not merely for the products of its labour, but for the maintenance of its labourers.

19. It is not to be wondered at, then, that he who traced with so graphic and powerful a hand the reflex influence of commerce upon agriculture, should have sometimes forgotten the natural order of precedency betwixt them. He certainly did more than any of his predecessors in the science, in restoring to agriculture the proper honours and ascendency which belong to her. Yet he does give a power to the enterprise and the accumula-

tion of merchants, which neither experience nor the nature of things will justify. None was more successful than he, in exposing the crude imaginations of those who thought to enrich the country by means of a restricted commerce. But along with this, he greatly overrated the effect of an emancipated commerce, or of commerce set at liberty from its fetters. He very clearly demonstrated the impolicy of those artificial checks, which, in the shape of monopoly or prohibition, had been laid upon trade. But he seems not to have been fully aware of the natural check which stands in the way of its indefinite extension—and by which a gradual retardation, and ultimately an immovable arrest, are laid on the progress of agriculture, and of population, and of capital, and so of commerce. The truth does appear, throughout the work of this great author, in occasional glimpses—but not so explicitly, or with such application and effect, as it would have done had the doctrine of population been understood in his day. This single element alone would have modified a number of his conclusions; and, more particularly, he would not have held out to society the promise of an endless advancement, as if every effort of parsimony, and every accumulation of capital, were infallibly to speed it forward. He seems to reason as if the simple act of preparing commodities, and placing them as it were on one side of an exchange, will, through the operation of stimulus, call forth into existence equivalent commodities on the other side of it. This process, it is true, was conspicuously and memorably exemplified, at that period in his-

tory, which may be characterized as the period of transition from the middle to the modern ages of Europe. But that was no sufficient cause, why it should have been regarded and reasoned upon as the universal process for all ages.

20. There is, in truth, a wide difference between the state of things at the commencement, and after the full establishment and continuance, of this new era. Then the passion for war had just given place to the passion for wealth and luxury; and this latter passion, when newly awoke, found a soil of boundless and yet unentered capabilities on which to expatiate. The rude and infant husbandry of Europe had a mighty career before it, along which the increasing products of commerce met with their sure return in the increasing products of agriculture. The spirit of mercantile adventure could safely indulge in every variety of caprice and speculation; for the unsated appetite of the landlord found, in the before untouched resources of his land, the means of extended gratification. Commerce appeared to anticipate agriculture, and might almost have ventured in reality to do so, yet not be disappointed; for however it multiplied its wares and its whimsies, it found a ready admission for them in the growing wealth, and the now stimulated fancy and taste of its country customers. It is really not to be wondered at, that men should have been led to imagine, as if commerce had a commencing and a creative virtue in this process; and that it had only to accumulate, and to employ, and to produce, in order to carry forward the prosperity of the nation with uniform, or with accele-

rated progress. Commerce, in fact, was the prime, the executive agent in Europe, for unlocking the capabilities of the soil; and, at a period when these were rapidly evolved, the articles which it fabricated and brought to market seldom failed to meet with purchasers of sufficient wealth and sufficient number; and so also with a price which enveloped in it the profit of all the capitalists, the comfortable subsistence of all the labourers. It was most natural, in these circumstances, to conceive of commerce as an *efficient cause*, not merely for the commodities of its own workmanship, but for the maintenance of its own workmen; and, if agriculture was not just made of subordinate rank to commerce, commerce was regarded as of fully co-ordinate rank with agriculture. Nevertheless it will be found, we think, on further consideration, that however events may have fallen out historically in the order of time, there is an order of nature, and an order of influence, which must be attended to, ere the essential relations of agriculture and commerce be rightly understood. We hold the real dependence of the latter upon the former, to be a truth of capital importance in political economy; and that, if steadfastly kept in view, and carried forward to its legitimate applications, it would put to flight a number of those delusions and errors which, in the course of speculation, have gathered around the science.

21. One plain distinction, and a distinction not to be overlooked by the slight exceptions which can be alleged against it, is, that to agriculture mainly we owe the necessaries of life; whereas,

many of its luxuries cannot be had without commerce and manufactures. This is a most momentous distinction, and a vast deal turns upon it. We not only see in it, that manufactures must necessarily, in point of extent, be limited by the produce of the soil; but that the owners of the soil, in virtue of the property which belongs to them, have a natural superiority over all other classes of men, which by no device of politics or law can be taken away from them. The holder of what I cannot want, is the master of my services. He can impress upon them any direction which seemeth unto him good. He can transfer his demand from one luxury to another; and so, as far as his consumption goes, he can extend one manufacture at the expense of a proportional abridgment on another manufacture. Or, he can part with the use of some tangible commodity altogether, and, with the price which went to purchase it, may obtain for himself the use of a menial servant; and, in so doing, he effects an absolute reduction in the manufactures of the country. Or, whether in the spirit of a voluntary patriotism, or in submission to lawful authority, he may render to the state the price of many luxuries; and thus withdraw so many of the disposable population from the business of trade, to the business of our national establishments. It is thus that any given change in the taste or habit of our landlords, would effect a corresponding change in the employment of the great mass of our disposable population. They are virtually the holders of the maintenance of this class of labourers; and it is their collective

will which fixes the direction of their labour. Apart from the importation of food, there can be no more labourers in the country than the produce of their estates will subsist. It is the quantity of this produce which fixes the amount of labour; and as far as the labour of the disposable population is concerned, it is the will of the holders of this produce which fixes the direction of it. They are the natural masters of the country; and the ascendancy wherewith their property invests them, hinges on this clear and simple distinction—Men can want luxuries; they cannot want necessaries.

22. But more than this. Every increase of food is followed up by an increase of population. It is not so with any other manufactured goods, save in as far as that may work an increase of food, by pushing on the limit of cultivation in the way that we have already explained. Such, at all events, is the difference between the two sorts of produce, that the market cannot permanently be overladen with corn, even though its growers should persist in keeping up and increasing the supply of it. Unlike to all other articles of merchandise, an increased supply of food is surely and speedily followed up by an increased demand for it. It may be a drug in the market for a year or two; but though it should continue to be sent, in the same, or in superior abundance, season after season, it will not remain so. The reason is, that, unlike to other commodities, it creates a market for itself. Through the medium of the stimulus given to population, it does what no other articles of merchandise can do—it multiplies its own consumers.

A plenty of the first necessaries, is the only species of plenty which surely and largely tells on the population. A plenty of luxuries has no such effect; and not even a plenty of the second necessaries, as shoes or stockings, or the materials of house-building. The proprietors of the first necessaries are on the only sure vantage-ground. They alone have nothing to fear ultimately from the indefinite supply of their peculiar commodity. The produce of agriculture may be made to increase, up to the uttermost limit of its capabilities; for, whatever the additional number may be which it can feed, that number will rise to be fed by it.

23. We can therefore be at no loss to perceive, how an indefinite supply of the products of agriculture, must be followed up by a like indefinite supply of the products of manufactures or commerce. The people whom it feeds, give, in their handiwork, a return for their subsistence. But this does not hold true of the reverse proposition. The products of manufactures do not *indefinitely* call forth the products of agriculture. They did so historically, at that period when they effected a change in the taste and habit of landlords. They still do so gradually, when, in virtue of their greater supply by an improvement in the powers of labour, they reduce the numbers of the secondary class, and so push cultivation further among the inferior soils. But beyond this limit they have no power. An increase of agricultural produce will, through the medium of an increasing population, be followed up, *pari passu*, by an increase of manufactured commodities. But a mere increase of manufactured

commodities, cannot force the existing barrier in the way of cultivation, or force an entrance upon that land which is not able to feed its agricultural labourers and their secondaries. There is one way in which this barrier may be made to retire. Labourers may consent to be worse fed than before, or to put up with fewer of the secondary accommodations. If, with this reduction in the standard of enjoyment, they still work as hardly, or, if even with the same, and perhaps a higher standard, they are willing to put forth more than their wonted labour—this might widen the limits, and so multiply the products of agriculture. Still, after these modifications are admitted, there is a wide difference between agriculture and manufactures—the former influencing the latter, in a way that the latter cannot influence the former. Agriculture, with every permanent increase of its products, can, through the medium of an increasing population, command a like increase in the products of manufactures. Manufactures cannot, by any increase of their products, while the standard of enjoyment, and the powers of personal and mechanical labour remain the same, force a like increase in the products of agriculture.

24. This distinction between agriculture and manufactures, would serve greatly to modify the reasonings of Dr Smith, when, without reference to any such distinction, he tells of one species of commodities stimulating the production of another species of commodities. It follows not, because commerce had the power, by tempting landlords from an old to a new habit of expenditure, of ex-

torting additional products from a soil whose capabilities had scarcely been entered on; it therefore has this power, when agriculture, with its stationary or slowly-receding limit, has either reached, or is so much nearer the uttermost length to which it can be carried. The stimulus might be as powerful as before. There might be as intense a desire for the increase of enjoyments, whether they be the enjoyments of pleasure, or those of pageantry. But this moving force is in contact now with an obstacle which stood then at a distance so remote, as to have permitted an advancing movement, and that a tolerably free one, for several centuries. We now begin to feel, and may indeed be said to have long felt the utter powerlessness of mere production in manufactures, to enlarge the wealth, or speed forward the economic prosperity of a land. What commerce did in an incipient, it cannot do in an extreme state of agriculture; and in the oldest and richest countries of Europe, the sanguine, the splendid anticipations which the earlier experience awakened, checked and chastised as they have been by the later experience, are now beginning to be abandoned.

25. But not only is there a visionary hope associated with this contemplation,—there is also an alarm which, it is comfortable to think, is alike visionary. They who so count on the reaction of a stimulus, as to imagine, that every addition beyond their present extent to our manufactures, will give a proportional enlargement to our agriculture, might also imagine, that every subtraction beneath their present extent from our manufactures, will

proportionally lessen and contract our agriculture also. The two imaginations, in fact, are products of one and the same fallacy. He who thinks that it was the creation of a manufacture which stimulated and called forth an increase of agriculture, may well be apprehensive lest the destruction of the manufacture should as much throw the agriculture back again. Now, it is not so. Though a particular manufacture should be brought to ruin, and the employment in it should cease, the counterpart maintenance will not cease; and our security against this effect is, that there would still remain a sufficiency of objects, on which it were not only possible, but felt by the landlords to be desirable, that they should still spend their incomes. There is not a luxury that can be named, the loss of which would cause our agriculture to go back; even though, historically, it may have been the first presentation of that luxury to their notice, which, by its effect on the appetency of landlords, helped to bring the agriculture forward. Now that the revulsion has taken place from the habit of the middle ages, there is no danger of the surplus produce of their estates lying idle in their hands. They will set their hearts on as large a revenue as before; and notwithstanding the ruin or disappearance of many separate trades, they will still find use for it all. In other words, amid the numerous failures and fluctuations of employment, they in the meanwhile will not let down the cultivation of a single acre; so that there shall remain as large a maintenance for the same population as before. The expenditure of its holders would be changed, but

not lessened. The destruction of one manufacture would be followed up by the creation or the extension of another; or there would be a proportionate addition to the retinue of our landlords. At all events, we should behold as large a disposable class as well supported as ever. It may be Utopianism to expect, that beyond the limits of our present agriculture, there lies before us a career of endless and ever-advancing prosperity; but we might at least give up all our sensitive alarms, lest, by any revolution in the trading world, our prosperity shall ever be sensibly and permanently reduced beneath that limit. So long as we have law and liberty amongst us, our economic resources will be found as stable as the constitution of the seasons or of the soil. Unless we are struck from Heaven with the curse of barrenness, the present means of our subsistence will remain to us. We may have little to hope from a great enlargement of these means, yet have every thing to hope from a right distribution of them. There may be, there is, an impassable limit to the physical abundance of our products. There is no limit to the moral cultivation of our people. We may not be able greatly to increase our stores; but with the stores we have, a mighty achievement remains to us. We may indefinitely increase the virtuous and prudential habits of the community; and on these mainly, on these we should say exclusively, it depends, whether there shall or shall not be a high average of sufficiency and comfort among the families of the land.

26. It is now high time that the statesmen and

philanthropists of the old world should take this direction. It is to a moral restraint on the numbers of mankind, and not to a physical enlargement of the means for their subsistence, that we shall be henceforth beholden for sufficiency or peace in our commonwealth. It is from the power of Christian education, and not from the devices of the economists, that our deliverance is to come. And yet we abide almost as reckless of this truth, as if in the morning of our history we had still the world to begin, or had still in reserve a land of boundless extent and fertility, on which, as in America, we might expatiate unchecked by any barrier of physical necessity for many generations. To employ the language of the schoolmen, we are still looking objectively to the enlargement of resources in the outer world of matter, instead of looking subjectively to the establishment of habit and principle in the inner world of mind. Yet thence, and thence alone, will proceed our help and our emancipation from the miseries which beset and straiten us; and nothing will more effectually demonstrate the supremacy of the moral over the physical, in the system of human affairs, than will the ameliorated condition coming in the train of ameliorated character, after the tried impotency of all other expedients.

27. Meanwhile, as the difficulties thicken, and the pressure becomes more severe, the expedients multiply. This is a teeming age for all sorts of crudities; and we have no doubt, that our very nearness to the ultimate and immovable barrier of our resources, has made the necessity to be all

the more intensely felt, and so given additional impulse to the speculations of philanthropists. Among others, the favourite device of employment has been acted on to a very great extent; though its inefficacy as a resource one might think, should be abundantly obvious, on the simple axiom, that employment is creative of nothing but its own products. It was a far more rational and likely expedient centuries ago, in the earlier stage of our agriculture, than it is at present; nor need we wonder, though in these days they should often have experienced a most convenient absorption of poverty and idleness in whole masses, simply by providing and dealing out work. There was room then for such an absorption, when the increasing products of the towns and villages could be met by the increasing products of a land, whose capabilities were yet so far from being fully overtaken. We accordingly meet with this expedient in the innumerable parliamentary acts of other days, for the suppression or the regulation of mendicity; and it was long the favourite scheme, both of parochial counsellors, and of individual philanthropists. The general rule of society is, that each man lives by his business; and the first natural imagination is, that this conjunction between work and maintenance is just, in every instance where poverty and idleness are seen together, to be repeated over again. England is rife with this experiment throughout her teeming parishes; and quarrying, and road-making, and breaking stones, and digging in gravel pits, and the manifold branches of in-door labour in workhouses, have all been devised; that, if pos-

sible, by the products of their industry, their surplus people might earn for themselves their subsistence, or a part of their subsistence. The conception is prevalent all over, and has been endlessly diversified into various ingenuities, alike amiable and abortive. The platting of straw, and picking of hemp, and various sorts of millinery and hand-manufactures, have all been tried and found wanting. The effect is a general depression in the price of the prepared article, whatever it may be; or if the article be altogether new, the purchasers who are allured to it, are withdrawn from the purchase of other articles. On either supposition, a whole body of regular labourers are impoverished by the weight of these additional products upon the general market; and so utterly fruitless indeed has it turned out as a permanent resource, that, in despair, the expedient has been abandoned in many parishes, and the extra population are suffered to lead a kind of lazzaroni life in idleness, and in the mischief and crime which are attendant upon idleness. The truth is, that if home-colonization fail, employment in manufactures is far more likely to fail. By the former, a certain portion at least of sustenance, is drawn from the earth in return for labour—though inadequate to the full maintenance of the labourers. By the other, something is produced too, but it is not sustenance; but a commodity to be offered in return for sustenance; and which cannot earn that sustenance for additional labourers, save at the expense of all previous labourers. The home-colonist, at work among the inferior soils, may

perhaps extract from them three-fourths of his maintenance, and leave the remaining fourth a burden upon society. The workman in a charity manufacture, burdens society with the whole of his subsistence. The article he prepares becomes cheaper and more plentiful than before; but he himself becomes the instrument of a general distress, by inducing a dearness and a scarcity on that which is most essential to families.*

Note.

The author on his re-perusal of this chapter, would press the following as its most important positions on the attention of the reader. 1. The reduction of various economical questions, as stated in § 3. to their solving principle in the extreme limit of cultivation. 2. The threefold division of the labouring classes in § 7. as affording a point of view, from which to have the command over a very wide domain in the science. 3. The connexion between the degree of fertility in the soil, and the gradation of rank and comfort in society, and more especially the natural theology which in § 10. is grounded on this contemplation. 4. The truism that each employment originates but its own products, and the correction which might be drawn from it against the errors of the mercantile policy, § 13. 5. The precedency § 20. of agriculture to

* See Appendix, B.—On Machinery.

commerce in the order of influence, notwithstanding the historical successions which took place in the order of time. And lastly, the relative and reciprocal influences of the two as expounded throughout the remainder of the chapter.

CHAPTER III.

On the Increase and Limit of Capital.

1. We use the term *capital*, in the sense which is assigned to it by the great majority of our economists; not as comprehending all material and monied wealth, but only that part of it which is employed in the business of production, and is generally so employed for the purpose of obtaining a profit. Stock is the generic term, of which capital forms only a part. Were a manufacturer to take account of his stock, he would put his dwelling-house, and his furniture, and his clothes into the inventory, along with all other things which belong to him; but his capital we should restrict to his machinery, and the houses which contain it, and his implements of labour, and the amount of money which he reserved either for the repairs of his trading establishment, or the payment of his labourers. They are these, and not his dwelling-house or furniture, which obtain for him the profit that constitutes his revenue. By laying up part of this profit, instead of spending the whole of it, he may add to his capital; and we hold it one of the most important inquiries in political economy, what the circumstances are which promote or limit the augmentation of an element that enters so largely into the views and reasonings of the science.*

* Capital, as an instrument of production, is conceived to be

2. Capital behoved to make an early appearance in the history of human society. The rudest implement that was first used in preparing the ground for the reception of seed, possessed all the essential attributes of capital. If, by the direct application of human hands to the soil, the requisite treatment of it could have been as easily effected, as with the intervention of tools and instruments, these latter would never have been employed. But the contrary of this was soon found; and when the branch of a tree was broken off, and rightly fashioned for scratching the surface of the earth, even at this rudimental stage do we behold the application of capital to agriculture. This primitive expedient for facilitating human labour, and making it more effective, exemplified the functions and the benefit of capital as distinctively, as do the spade or the plough that have superseded it, or as does all the various and complicated apparatus of modern husbandry.

3. Having, for the first time, introduced the element of profit to the notice of our readers, we think it right to premise this part of our argument, with two distinct notices regarding it.

4. The first is, that though profit enters as a distinct ingredient into the price of every article, yet that article may be supplied in far greater abundance, and, as it regards manufactured com-

bound up by means of agricultural improvement, with every piece of land, on the permanent amelioration of which, certain sums have been expended. And that part of the produce, which would have been yielded independently of this improvement, is ascribed, not to the capital which has been laid out upon the farm, but to the original powers of the soil.

modities, may be afforded far more cheaply to the consumer, than if there had been no capital applied to the production of it, and, consequently, no room for the imposition of such a charge. Even though it should require the constant labour of one man to make and to repair a plough, and the constant labour of another to use it, yet if, with one plough, as great an amount of work can be performed as with the mere handiwork of ten men, then, out of the maintenance of ten men, a liberal profit might well be afforded to the capitalist, and a large surplus produce, over and above, be afforded to the country. It is thus that capital, in the shape of farm-utensils of various sorts, by opening a descent to inferior soils, has inconceivably augmented the produce of the land, and so enabled it to maintain a vastly larger population. And furthermore, capital, by superadding mechanical to manual labour, has so augmented the amount of manufactured articles, that, notwithstanding the charge of profit to which it has given rise, both the luxuries and the second necessaries of life are furnished in much greater profusion, as well as greater cheapness, to society.

5. Our next notice in regard to profit is, that it has the effect of attaching the services of the disposable population to other masters, beside the mere landed proprietors. We believe, that, in a country constituted like ours, the latter will engross by far the largest proportion of these services. Yet every man elevated above the condition of the working classes has, more or less, the command of them. Every man whose expenditure reaches higher than the necessaries of life, has a certain amount of

enjoyment ministered to him, by one or more of the disposable population. Their office is the preparation of luxuries; and, when one looks to the style, and the splendour, and the establishment of merchants and manufacturers, it is obvious that they are admitted to a considerable share in the services of this class, along with the proprietors of land.

6. With these preliminary remarks, we may now inquire—What the real power of capital is for the maintenance of a people? There is nothing more constantly affirmed, in the writings of political economists, than the connexion between these two elements:—"The power of a country to maintain a population, is in proportion to its capital." "Increase the capital, and you increase its power to employ and to remunerate labour." "Capital is the fund, out of which the wages of labour are paid, and labourers are supported." These are so many different expressions for an oft-repeated aphorism in political science. Now, capital is the fruit of accumulation; and one might be led to imagine, from such representations, as if the frugality of merchants were the primary fountain-head, whence issued forth all the comfort and subsistence of labourers. At this rate, indefinite parsimony would be followed up by the indefinitely-augmenting power of maintaining labour; and, through the medium of personal economy, an unobstructed highway would be opened to increasing and successive enlargements in the amount of the population, or in the general sufficiency of their circumstances. This is the unequivocal impression given by the reasonings of Dr Smith, on the subject of capital,

and the methods of its increase.* There are checks to this progress, which he has either altogether overlooked, or at least forborne to dwell upon, and bring prominently forward. The rationale of a country's advancement in wealth and economic prosperity, has thus been misconceived. The limits, placed by nature and necessity in the way of this advancement, have not been sufficiently regarded; and more especially has it been thought, that there was a creative and an emanating power in capital, which could overleap these limits, and form a guarantee against all the evils that have been ascribed to redundant population.

7. And on this subject, too, we might learn a lesson at that place in the science, where so many other of its lessons are to be gathered—even at the margin of separation between the cultivated and the uncultivated land. We have already seen, that cultivation cannot be speeded forward beyond this margin, at a rate faster than the improvement in the powers of labour enables the land of next

* "Every prodigal appears to be a public enemy, and every frugal man a public benefactor."—"Parsimony, and not industry, is the immediate cause of the increase of capital."—"Parsimony, by increasing the fund which is destined for the maintenance of productive hands, tends to increase the number of these hands."—"By what a frugal man annually saves, he not only affords maintenance to an additional number of productive hands, for that of the ensuing year, but, like the founder of a public workhouse, he establishes, as it were, a perpetual fund for the maintenance of an equal number in all times to come."—*Wealth of Nations.*

These, and similar passages, taken together, certainly give the impression of an indefinite power, in indefinite parsimony, to carry the capital of a country, and its power to maintain labourers, beyond any limit which can be assigned. This has, accordingly, been contended for by several of Smith's commentators, in formal and express argument.

inferior quality to feed the agricultural labourers and their secondaries. If, by an undue increase of population, the cultivation is forced a greater way than this, then the land last entered on is not able to repay its cultivation, and distress is felt in the country because there are too many men. But as surely as there might be too many ploughmen, so there might be too many ploughs. If, in virtue of the excessive number of ploughmen, all cannot find employment, without forcing an entrance upon soils that would return inadequate wages for the labour, so, in virtue of the excessive number of ploughs, all cannot find employment, without a like return of inadequate profit for the capital. Nay, profit forms such a fraction in the price of most articles, that a large fluctuation of price might not only diminish profit, but annihilate it, or even, by the conversion, as in algebra, of positive into negative, might transmute the profit into loss. It appears from this instance, that just as agriculture might be overladen by an excess of labour, so might it be overladen by an excess of capital. And at the extreme boundary of cultivation, might there be distinctly seen the operation of that check which opposes the indefinite advancement of both. Diminish the wages of agricultural labour beneath a certain rate, and ploughmen will cease to be multiplied. Diminish the profit of agricultural capital beneath a certain rate, or, still more surely, annihilate profit, and ploughs will cease to be multiplied. Both the population and the capital are here brought alike to a stand; and, at the point now specified, both are alike impotent for the pur-

pose of enlarging the wealth of the country. The boasted power of capital for the maintenance of labour is, in this instance at least, found to be an illusion. There is no virtue in the excess of ploughs to maintain the excess of ploughmen. Nothing but an adequate return from the soil can uphold either; and for want of this, each excess must at length disappear,—it being as true of the capital as of the population, that it is heavier than the land can bear.

8. Now, what is true of agricultural, is true also of manufacturing capital. If, as we have found already, there may be too many manufacturing labourers, so may there be too many manufacturing implements of labour. On the former taking place, there is work done by human hands, without the return of an adequate human subsistence; and so a diminution of the population. On the latter taking place, there is work done by pieces of machinery, without the return of an adequate profit to their owners; and so a diminution of their capital. What is true of the living, is true of the inanimate instruments; both might be unduly multiplied. As there might be too many men, so might there be too many machines—too many power-looms, as well as too many weavers at hand-looms—too many cotton-mills, as well as too many cotton-spinners. There is a check to the one, in the lessening of wages; and in every way as sure a check to the other, in the lessening of profits. They have not looked far onward, who speak of the power which lies in capital to employ and to maintain labour. They have looked only to the first step in the pro-

cess—that at which the capitalist enlists workmen into his service; and for one year, or one term, can pay them liberally and well. They have not looked to the second step—that at which the return is made by them who purchase and use the commodity that has been thus manufactured. If this return be not an adequate one, the capital is not replaced; and, after a single revolution of the economic cycle, it again starts in diminished magnitude, and with a proportionally diminished power for the maintenance of labour.

9. There has recently been proposed a just and felicitous distinction, between the work done by human hands, and that done by tools, or machinery of any sort. The one is called the product of immediate, the other the product of antecedent labour. Under this view or conception of the matter, it will perhaps be more readily seen, that there may be a redundancy of capital, as well as of population. In respect of there being more of both, than there can be obtained any adequate return for, there is a complete identity between them. If there may be too much of immediate, so also may there be too much of antecedent labour, brought to bear both on agriculture and manufactures. Agriculture cannot be extended, unless the additional land that is taken in, be able not only to feed the ploughman, but also the makers of the plough. A manufacture cannot be extended, unless the additional commodity produced, will more than exchange for the maintenance both of the workers of the machine, and the makers of the machine that is employed. In each case a return

must be yielded, which shall both maintain the immediate labourers, and also remunerate the outlay that was expended in maintaining the antecedent labourers. There is occasionally an excess of both: and the effect, in the one case, is the distress and diminution of workmen; in the other, the distress of capitalists, and the diminution of capital.

10. The reasoning is just as applicable to monied, as to material capital. There is nothing in the intervention of this new element to affect our conclusion. Money when consisting of the precious metals, is itself viewed as a commodity. It may rather be regarded, as that which possesses the property, or the power, of lifting all commodities; or, under the very general aspect, of being that which enables its possessor to lift by purchase any commodities which may be presented, or which may be had for sale: the quantity thus lifted depending on the relative value which obtains between the money and the commodity in question. It is of no consequence to any inference of ours, whether gold or paper be the instrument of exchange, or, in other words, what the *substratum* of money is; of as little consequence, truly, as what the material is on which an order for payment shall happen to be written. Enough that it is an effectual order; and, however interesting the other questions may be, which relate to currency and its fluctuations, it is sufficient, for the determination of our particular question, that the existing currency, whether paper or metallic, possesses, for the time being, a certain power of lifting all such arti-

cles as are presented in a market; and so has the substantial functions of a circulating medium.

11. Let us now imagine the sum received by any merchant or manufacturer, at his great annual sale, to be eleven thousand pounds; of which he allocates one thousand to the expenses of his family, and reserves ten thousand for the continuation of his business. This latter sum he may be conceived to lay out in the repairs of his material capital, and in the maintenance of his workmen, who repeat the course of the by-gone year—that is, work up the same commodities for their employer; and which, if he again sell them for eleven thousand pounds, will enable him to start with the same advantage, and to enter on another rotation, in precisely the same circumstances as before.

12. The length of such rotations varies exceedingly in different trades, though they may all be generalized into one summary expression; and the world of trade may be conceived to revolve in what we shall call an economic cycle, which accomplishes one revolution, by business coming round again, through its successive transactions, to the point from which it set out. Its commencement may be dated from the point at which the capitalist has obtained those returns, by which his capital is replaced to him: whence he proceeds anew to engage his workmen; to distribute among them, in wages, their maintenance, or rather, the power of lifting it; to obtain from them, in finished work, the articles in which he specially deals; to bring these articles to market, and there terminate the orbit of one set of movements, by effecting a sale, and re-

ceiving, in its proceeds, a return for the whole outlays of the period.

13. There is nothing in the intervention of money, which should disguise the real character of this operation. If landed proprietors be the chief customers for the commodities in question, they do not just give, on the instant, the *ipsa corpora* of their wealth; but they give what is equivalent, a lifting power to a certain extent, or an order to a certain amount, for the produce of their land. This passes from the hand of the capitalist to the hand of his workmen; and they, on presenting it at a shop or a market, just get, in food, that chief article of maintenance, the proper and essential return for their labour. It must be obvious then, that principally with the holders of this maintenance, is lodged the power of replacing the outlays of the capitalist. His power to uphold, and still more to extend production on the one side, is mainly dependent on their power of affording him equivalents for his products upon the other. Economists have looked too exclusively to the accumulations of the merchant, as if these could indefinitely advance the wealth of a land. They have not enough considered the nature or the limits of that replacing power, which lies in the hands of his customers. They have calculated too much on his ability to produce, without at the same time calculating on their ability to purchase. It is thus that the check to the augmentation of capital, has not been sufficiently kept in view; and the most sanguine and splendid anticipations have been indulged, respecting the progress of society, without sufficient re-

gard to those immovable barriers which nature and necessity have placed in its way

14. In the first place, it is abundantly obvious, that mere accumulation by merchants or manufacturers, can only go a certain way, and, without the concurrence of other causes, must be speedily arrested. The capitalist of ten thousand pounds, who, upon its whole outlay, has eleven thousand pounds returned to him annually, can afford to spend a thousand pounds in the year, and to maintain, in a stationary condition, the principal which belongs to him. But it may happen, that the taste for accumulation shall prevail over the taste for splendour or comfort. Let him reduce his yearly expenditure from a thousand pounds to eight hundred, and he will be able to vest an additional two hundred pounds in his business. And he may succeed by this, in realizing a proportional increase of revenue, seeing that no individual parsimony of his can sensibly affect the general rate of profit in the country. But suppose that the same passion for accumulation should seize upon all the capitalists in the land. Let the whole sum invested by them in trade be ten millions; and their united revenue, with a profit of ten per cent. will be one million. Should all this revenue be spent, both the capital and the profit will remain stationary. But if, in virtue of the change which we now imagine—a change in the average taste and will of merchants—one-fifth of this revenue were saved, and employed in giving additional extent to their business; then, at the next revolution of the economic cycle, instead of ten millions, we should

behold ten millions and two hundred thousand pounds vested in trade. The parsimony of one, or a few individuals, could have no noticeable effect; but such a general parsimony would tell most sensibly on the rate of profit. The truth is, that, *all other circumstances remaining the same*, the revenue of merchants would fall, and that to the very extent in which they had enlarged their capital. For the one saving of two hundred thousand pounds, they would just lose this sum yearly in all time coming. The producing power of manufactures would be extended by this accumulation of theirs, but the returning power of consumers may remain unaltered. There would be more goods brought to market than before, but the whole price given for them may not be greater than before. Anterior to the general saving that we now imagine, capitalists, for the prime cost of ten millions, receive, in the whole price of their commodities, eleven millions. But since that saving, they, for the prime cost of ten millions two hundred thousand pounds, receive the same sum of eleven millions. By the saving in question, they have become at once richer in capital, and poorer in revenue. For the two hundred thousand pounds which they have added to the one, they have sustained a greatly overpassing loss; for they have taken two hundred thousand, and that yearly, from the other. It might be safe and profitable for one capitalist, or a certain fractional number of them, to accumulate. But a general accumulation cannot take place, save at the expense of the general revenue of capitalists. It is true, that, so long as agri-

culture is in progress, there might be yearly additions to the returning or replacing power, by which as large, or a larger revenue, might be afforded to a still enlarging capital. But when the progress of agriculture becomes slow and difficult, or, most of all, when it touches upon the extreme limit, then the impotency of accumulation on the part of capitalists must be severely felt. Each new investiture, in fact, will then be followed up by an adverse reaction or recoil upon themselves. As they grow in capital, they will decline in revenue. There is no escaping from this consequence, after that the returning power has become stationary. Every addition to capital, causes just a permanent yearly abstraction of the same amount from revenue; and the same return, on a larger prime cost, is all which the capitalists reap for their pains. Society obtains their enjoyments at a cheaper rate, when, by an overdone competition among capitalists, each strains at becoming richer than before. But if there be no increase in the wealth of customers, capitalists cannot persevere in such a walk of speculation, without impoverishment and ruin to many of themselves.

15. We may now see what the check is to an indefinite accumulation on the part of capitalists. If the returning power be represented by eleven millions, it is obvious that the capital vested in business cannot go beyond it. At ten millions, it would command a profit of one million to the capitalists; and, if they chose to accumulate to a capital above this, they may successively advance it up to ten millions one hundred thousand, ten

millions two hundred thousand, ten millions three hundred thousand, or ten millions four hundred thousand pounds: in which case, they would as surely reduce their collective income to nine, or eight, or seven, or six hundred thousand pounds. They might even, by the mere force of their own accumulations, bring up the capital indefinitely near to the eleven millions, but with the sure effect of bringing down this revenue indefinitely near to annihilation. Could they afford to live on nothing, they might push forward the capital to eleven millions, and annihilate profits entirely. Or if, from some other source than their accumulations, capital were still farther extended, and so as to overpass the eleven millions, profit would be converted into loss, and there would take place the absorption of a yearly excess. At the termination of the economic cycle, capital would constantly revert to eleven millions. Whatever the amount of capital may be, which, at the commencement of the economic cycle, merchants and manufacturers are able to advance, its amount, in the end, must of necessity be limited by what customers are able to return.

16. This brings into view a most important element, which hitherto has scarcely been admitted into the consideration of profit. We are abundantly familiar with the idea, that the rate of wages is dependent on the average standard of enjoyment among labourers. But we have not been so accustomed to think of the rate of profit, as depending on the average standard of enjoyment among capitalists. Nevertheless, it is actually so.

It is a question with every individual capitalist, whether he shall spend the whole revenue of the current year, or how much of it he shall reserve, for the purpose of vesting it in trade, and so giving additional extension to his business—or, finally, whether he shall expend more than his revenue, and so trench upon his capital? This question turns precisely on the balance between two appetites of his nature—between the appetite for eventual gain, and the appetite for present comfort. Should the latter prevail, *and prevail generally*, capital would be kept down, and profit be sustained. Should the former prevail, and also prevail generally, capital would be augmented, and profit be depressed. It does not affect this conclusion, that the highway to fortune, on the part of the individual merchant, is to save as much, and spend as little of his revenue as he can. It is true of every single capitalist, that he is all the richer by saving than spending; and that, under any given rate of profit, or with any given general habit on the part of capitalists. But it is not true that capitalists collectively, will become richer by saving than by spending; for, on their general habit, the rate of profit immediately and essentially depends. Could they effectuate a combination amongst themselves, they might uphold, at their general and collective pleasure, the rate of profit and interest in the land. But they are not able to achieve so extensive a concert, nor would its members be individually faithful in their observation of it; and this is not the only instance, in which the good of society is secured by the im-

possibility of combinations. Meanwhile, nothing can be truer, than that just as the wages of labour depend on the collective taste and will of labourers, so the profits of stock depend on the collective taste and will of capitalists. With this view, profits are what capitalists in the aggregate choose to make them. And however little the rate of profit may have been associated in the minds of economists, with the standard of enjoyment in the middle classes of society—yet, ultimately and efficiently, this is precisely the element on which it turns.*

* Mr Thomas Perronet Thomson has, with his accustomed shrewdness, noticed this connexion, and thus felicitously remarks upon it:—

"And as opinions and habits determine the final or average proportion, which shall be maintained between the numbers of the labouring population and the funds for their support, or, in other words, determine the average rate of wages; so they also determine the average rate of profits of stock, which are only the wages of another description of labourers, consisting partly of the recompense of present labour exerted in the form of superintendence, and partly of the recompense of past labour exerted in the creation of their capital. Public opinion and custom require, for example, that a shopkeeper shall have a good coat—shall drink at all times malt liquor, and sometimes wine, and give them to his neighbours; that his wife and daughters, if he has any, shall wear clean linen, and moreover not wash it themselves; and that when they travel, it shall be by the stage-coach, and not by the waggon. Though he may do without some or other of these things, in a certain degree, when necessity presses, he cannot and will not do without them in the main. If, therefore, he is a man of foresight, he will at all events defer adding to the population of shopkeepers, till he sees a fair prospect of supporting a family in the way which public opinion pronounces to be respectable. But if he engages in it without foresight, he will keep down the population of shopkeepers in another way—for he will break. Bankruptcy is the check to the indefinite multiplication of traders, as the evils arising from diminished food are the check to the indefinite multiplication of the lower classes of labourers. In the same manner, if the higher order of traders would, or could, do without a certain rate

17. But it will demonstrate still more forcibly and clearly the limit to accumulation, if we reflect that the power of accumulating is not confined to capitalists; but that it may be, and often is, exemplified by their customers; and more especially by those who are the chief consumers of luxuries, and who have it therefore in their power to econo-

of expenditure, they might remit something of their rate of profits. If a great brewer, for example, would drive his family to the two shilling gallery in one of his own drays; or a banker be content, as in India, to sit on a mud floor in the shop of his forefathers, and retire to swallow rice with the condiment of ghee—there would be some chance of the thing being brought to pass. But the crowning city has determined, that her merchants shall be princes, and her traffickers the honourable of the earth; and they neither can, nor will resist the award. The opinion of society, therefore, is what, in the long run, determines and keeps up the rate of recompense in this class, as well as in the other; and though there may be individual exceptions, men in general will break, sooner than not live up to what is expected from them. The difficulty is not in finding men to live up to this mark; but in finding men who will live within their means. The profits of stock, like wages, may be momentarily elevated or depressed, by the fluctuations, in the proportion between the business to be done, and the men who are to do it. When business is scarce, the competition may, to a certain degree, induce traders to do it at a cheaper rate; and the contrary. But if the scarcity of business is permanent, traders will begin to go out by the horn-gate of bankruptcy, and so the balance will be preserved."—*True Theory of Rent*, 7th Edit. pp. 16, 17.

Mr Thomson does not, perhaps, advert distinctly enough to overtrading, as a far more copious source of bankruptcy than overliving. Under a system of universal parsimony, a permanent scarcity of business relatively to the capital would ensue, and the horn-gate might be far more crowded, than under a liberal system of expenditure on the part of merchants. It is true, that the same general recklessness which leads men to overspend, might lead them to overspeculate; but it is far more to the latter, than the former habit, that our bankruptcies are owing. On the other hand, the same caution which restrains a man from spending beyond his revenue, may restrain him from trading beyond his capital—as perhaps in Holland. It is from the latter exercise of caution, greatly more than from the former, that bankruptcies are so rare in that country.

mise the use of them. We can imagine that part of our capital, which is connected with the industry of the disposable population, to amount to ten millions, being the prime cost of all the goods wrought up by this class of labourers, which enter into one revolution of the economic cycle. Should these be met by a returning power of eleven millions, the capital is fully replaced, and with a profit that enables the capitalists to live at a certain rate of luxury and comfort. But if, after the commencement of this revolution, the holders of the returning power had been visited with the inclination to save more and spend less,—if a general retrenchment had taken place among them, so that, instead of spending eleven millions, they had laid up five, and had only assigned six millions to the purchase of those articles which had been brought to market at the expense of ten millions, —it is quite evident, that, in this instance, the original capitalists of these ten millions would find the market sadly overladen, at least, with their commodities. They had enlisted into the service of their different establishments a disposable population, whose office it is to work up luxuries for those who are enabled by their revenues to purchase them. But should a taste for luxury give place to a taste for accumulation, in the degree that we have now specified, it is obvious, that the lessening of the effective demand from eleven to six millions, must just have the effect of lessening, in this proportion, the price of their commodities. And, so far from its being in their power by parsimony, or in any other way, indefinitely to extend

the capital in their hands; we find that this is not only limited by the power of their customers, but that, by a change in the will or taste of these customers, this capital could be wrested to any given extent away from them.

18. To intercept all evasions, it may be right to trace the effect of this change a little farther. The sum of five millions, that we conceive to have been laid up by landed proprietors, is not therefore hoarded. Generally, it would be deposited in hands which lay it out in quest of gain, or on production, for the sake of a profit. We are aware of its being equally spent in either way. But, whereas formerly it wont to be spent as revenue, and with an immediate view to consumption; now it is spent as capital, and with an immediate view to production. Let this conversion of revenue into capital be supposed to have taken place at the commencement, or along the progress, of the one economic revolution, which we suppose to have been signalized by the change in question. Then it had been possible, that, prior to the result of a market overstocked with luxuries, and the price of them falling to the level of the reduced demand, this sum of five millions might have been, imprudently or unforeseeingly, vested in the manufacture of luxuries—when, with fifteen millions expended on their preparation, and a returning power of only six millions to replace this outlay, the failure in the speculation behoved to be all the more signal. But, though this conversion of revenue into capital had not taken place till the economic cycle had fully revolved, still there would

have been but a return of six millions to a cost of ten millions; and a reduction to this extent behoved to have taken place in the capital of the original manufacturers. Or, allowing them, as before, a million a year for their maintenance, they could only begin their operations anew with a capital of five millions. So that this conversion of revenue into capital by consumers, has not increased the capital of the country. It has only shifted it into other hands. The sum of five millions, that formerly wont to be spent, is saved; or, in other words, instead of going to replace capital in its old situation, it has gone to create capital in a new situation. The whole difference is, that, instead of being returned, it has been retained; and, for the original capitalists in the possession of ten millions, we now behold their capital reduced to five, and the remaining five in the possession of so many customers, who, by their savings, have enriched themselves, but only to the extent in which the others have been impoverished.

19. We may pursue this hypothetical case a little further. The manufacturers of luxuries must now reduce their establishments in the proportion of the reduced demand. Should only six millions' worth of the commodities in which they deal continue to be bought, from year to year, they have still capital enough left for this extent of business. But, meanwhile, the sum of five millions, now in the hands of their old customers, waits for a profitable occupation; and, in seeking after it, they will have been effectually warned, by the losses of their predecessors, from the manufacture of luxuries.

Let us now, then, turn from this department of business, that has just rejected the excess of capital, wherewith it was overladen, and try to imagine a settlement for the new-formed capital in some other branch of the national industry. And there is a great, and withal a distinct department of this sort, where are prepared, not the luxuries of life for the wealthy, but the second necessaries of life for the general population. This sum will be superadded to the capital already vested in that species of industry, which we may suppose to have been previously of the amount of ten millions. It will thus be made to attain the magnitude of fifteen millions. By this change, the sum of five millions is withdrawn from the support of industry in the third class of labourers, and transferred to the support of industry in the second class. The labourers, on the whole, will have the same money, but not more, distributed among them as formerly; though a great change will be effected in the distribution of their industry—half the disposable population being taken off from the manufacture of luxuries, and passing into the secondary population, whose employment is the manufacture of second necessaries. At all events, the great customers for the second necessaries, the labourers, will not be able to make larger offers of money in the market for them than they wont; that is, if, in the purchase of second necessaries, they could only afford to pay eleven millions previous to this change, this is all the sum which they can afford still. Formerly they replaced the capital of ten millions, and afforded an additional million in profit for the live-

lihood of the capitalists. They would now fall short of replacing the capital of fifteen millions, embarked in the preparation of second necessaries, by the sum of four millions. The capitalists who dealt in second necessaries, allowing them one million to live upon, would only be able to start, as before, with ten millions, and that notwithstanding the investiture of an additional five millions at the commencement of the last economic cycle in their business. Such a yearly investiture, in fact, all other circumstances remaining the same, would be followed up by a regular yearly extinction of the sum invested. There would of course, so long as it continued, be an unnatural cheapness of the second necessaries. Let the wealthy stint themselves to one-half of their usual luxuries, and then vest the produce of their economy in the manufacture of second necessaries, and this were tantamount to a gratuitous distribution, to that extent, of additional second necessaries among the general population. The additional investiture of five millions, calling forth no additional return from the purchasers, is, in effect, equivalent to a gift of five millions' worth shared among them. It is not necessary to strengthen our argument, by supposing the taste for accumulation to extend also among the common people. They would certainly be enabled to indulge this taste, by the cheapness of all the second necessaries, and might, if they so chose, spend less than their wonted sum on the purchase, and yet be as well clothed and lodged as formerly. This, as far as it went, would reduce their return for the fifteen millions, to a less sum than the eleven

millions, and serve to enhance still more the proof of an utter powerlessness on the part of indefinite parsimony to create or to sustain an indefinitely increasing capital.

20. As capital, then, would not continue to rush into a business where the goods, from the excess and superfluity of their production, sold for less than prime cost, we may now, with all safety, conclude, that the five millions annually saved by the landed proprietors, and which had been rejected from the manufacture of luxuries, would be equally rejected from the manufacture of second necessaries. And should the saving continue to be made, there only remains another great department on which to try the investiture of this sum. After having sought in vain for the profitable occupation of itself in the business of the disposable and secondary classes, we may now suppose, for a moment, that it has found a landing-place in agriculture. In this case, half the disposable population, withdrawn from their old employment, would be turned to the new employment of cultivating the land—spreading tillage over a greater extent than before among soils which had been yet unbroken, and carrying it to a greater depth and perfection than before, in the soils that had previously been entered on. It should be recollected that, previous to this accumulation and its investiture, the agriculture had been already carried forward to that limit which has so often met our notice; and from the contemplation we may again draw an important lesson—even that there is a like limit to the extension of capital. But, before adverting to this limit, we

would remark, in the first instance, that, if the agricultural capital, previously to this new investiture, was ten millions, it now becomes fifteen millions. And as there is nothing in this change which can immediately, and at once, furnish the general population with a greater returning power than before, there would only, for one year at least, be a return of ten millions for the now extended investiture of fifteen millions. We believe, that, in this department of business, the loss would be greatly aggravated by the circumstance of the great increase that must at first take place in the food of the country, without an instant corresponding increase of population. This would cheapen the article much beneath the rate at which luxuries or second necessaries would be cheapened, from the same cause of an excess in their production. One can indefinitely extend his use of luxuries, or his use of second necessaries, but he cannot indefinitely extend his use of the first necessaries of life. One can treat himself with double the amount of splendid furniture, or use double the amount of clothes, but he cannot eat double the quantity of bread that he wont. It is thus that an excess of food causes a much greater depression of its price, than a like excess of most other articles; so that the return for the fifteen millions of capital, now embarked in agriculture, would, we are persuaded, be greatly less than the eleven millions, formerly returned for the ten millions that wont to be embarked in it. This will always form a strong initial barrier in the way of vesting more capital in agriculture, than what the state of the country at the time admitted

of. No distant anticipations could tempt capitalists very far in this walk of speculation, with such a grievous absorption to meet them at the outset, or could tempt men by their savings to become capitalists.

21. But although there were no fall of price from the extension of agriculture beyond its natural limit, there is a sufficient barrier to this extension in the unproductiveness of the land which lies beyond it. The agriculture stops where it does, just because the land of last quality is barely sufficient to repay the expenses of its husbandry; and, in the existing state of agricultural labour and machinery, no land beneath this could be attempted without loss to the cultivator. We might conceive of the next land beneath, that its produce fell short, by one-tenth, of the ability to feed its agricultural labourers and their secondaries; or, that it would require a hundred, made up from both these classes, to raise food for ninety labourers. This would obviously increase the whole means of subsistence in the country. By this single instance, there would be food for ninety labourers added to the whole previous amount of the national produce, although it did require the work of a hundred labourers to raise it. Were this instance multiplied into an extensive system of home-colonization, there is no doubt that, in the first instance, there would be a sensible increase of the chief necessaries of life, and a temporary cheapening thereof, to the sensible relief of all the labouring classes in the land. But the increase of population would speedily restore the old price, when we should behold a larger, but

not a more comfortable peasantry than before; and the last land, now that the natural limit of cultivation had been forced, only yielding the food of ninety labourers in return for the work of a hundred. It may be asked, whence are the ten labourers maintained? The husbandry of these inferior soils, not being able to repay itself, must be maintained, either by the voluntary benevolence of individuals, or by taxation. In either way there is a sacrifice of luxury on the part of the wealthier classes; or, in other words, so many labourers are withdrawn by this operation from the disposable, and placed in the agricultural or secondary classes. The process by which food has been raised for an additional hundred, has had the effect of at least withdrawing ten from the disposable population. It may be extended to land of the next inferior quality; where, for every additional hundred that can be fed by its produce, twenty must be withdrawn from the disposable population. This may be conceived to go downward, till rent is annihilated, or the last man is withdrawn from a disposable population, now upheld by the landed proprietors. So that home-colonization, the moment it passes beneath the limit of that land which yields a profit to the cultivator, may be regarded as having entered on the first step of a process, that, if consummated, would give us a larger population certainly, but a population almost wholly made up of the secondary and agrarian classes; and, therefore, labouring for the supply of a now larger society in the mere necessaries of existence. Meanwhile, the disposable population must have waned toward its extinction.

The community will have gained in numbers, but not in comfort, even to the general mass of families. And it will have lost the services which are rendered by the disposable class—a forfeiture this, not merely of the elegancies of life to the wealthier classes, but the far heavier forfeiture of all that can civilize the species, or subserve the purest and highest objects of patriotism.*

22. But, without here pursuing this speculation so far, we may clearly see how, even at the outset of such a process, there is a limit to the profitable embarkation of additional capital on agriculture. The land which cannot even feed its direct and secondary labourers, will far less yield a remuneration to the capital which landlords may have saved from their revenue; and which, rejected from two of the great branches of national industry, is vainly endeavouring to find a profitable investment for itself in the greatest and most important of all—the agricultural department. The domain of cultivation is, no doubt, gradually widening with the improvements that are ever taking place in the methods of agricultural labour. But when capital makes a rash attempt beyond this boundary, it is sure to be absorbed. While landed property continues, and the owners have a free control over their own movements, this cannot long be submitted to. The landlord will not continue to employ, on a land that brings no return, agricultural labourers, who might, for the sum he is yearly spending in the shape of unproductive capital, be serving him in the capacity of disposable labourers;

* See Appendix, C.—On Home-Colonization.

and from whose hands he might obtain a substantial return of comfort for the same sum, when expended in the shape of revenue. Neither will the tenant persist in cultivating land which yields him no profit. There is no escaping from the conclusion. Accumulation, or the conversion of revenue into capital, has its limits in this as well as in every other division of the business of society. In other words, capital is hemmed on all sides by a slowly-receding boundary, which it cannot overpass; and beyond which, if it attempt to enlarge itself, it is broken into surges at the barrier by which it is surrounded.*

Note.

The doctrine of this chapter as being new to Political Economy will run counter to all those habits of thought which have been grounded on an acquaintance with previous writers in the science. The attention of the reader is therefore particularly requested to § 7 and 8, and especially to the proposition, obvious enough one might think, when it

* We may here remark, how extraordinary it is, that the doctrine of the impossibility of a general glut—or, which comes to the same thing, the doctrine, that capital might find indefinite room for its own profitable investiture—should have been strenuously advocated by the disciples of a school, which connects the rate of profit with the return that is yielded to the husbandman by the last cultivated land. It is sufficient, to establish our view of the question, that the land which can afford a rent is of finite quantity, and requires but a finite capital for the full occupation of it. Let the capital then exceed this, and flow over on soils of inferior fertility, and you will soon reach an agriculture, the produce of which cannot even feed the direct and secondary labourers. This affords a clear

is stated—that if there may be too many labourers, so may there be too many implements of labour. We must therefore confess a great value for the principle, § 16, that the average standard of enjoyment among capitalists has a regulating and controlling influence on the rate of profit—just as the standard of enjoyment among labourers affects wages. We would also refer to § 21, on the effects of home-colonization—both as perniciously influencing the distribution of labourers; and, without adding to the comfort of the working classes, most seriously abridging the general good of society.

example of a return falling short of the outlay,—the food produced falling short of the food expended. Now, on the principle, and it is a just one, that the profit on all other business is commensurate with that on agriculture, we shall, in such a state of things, from the general exuberance of capital, have profit converted into loss, or what may be termed a negative profit, repressing this exuberance throughout all the departments of enterprise, and so keeping down the capital to what the country can bear.

CHAPTER IV.

On the parallel between Population and Capital, both in respect of their limits and their powers of expansion.

1. We have now abundantly shown, how impossible it is to sustain or accumulate capital beyond what a country can bear in the existing state of its agriculture; though, when the agriculture itself extends, every thing else extends along with it. The larger population, consequent on the increase of agricultural produce, demands a larger supply of the second necessaries, and the manufacture of these requires additional hands, and the investiture of new capital. The increase of rent, consequent on the descent among inferior soils, gives to landlords a larger command over the luxuries of life than before; and hence, a greater disposable population, with room also for the employment of additional capital in this branch of the nation's industry. Only let the agriculture be such that the population may be comfortably fed; and there is no fear of a right distribution for them,—falling in as they will, among the agricultural, the secondary, or the disposable classes, just according to circumstances. And there is as little fear of the labourers, in all the three, being rightly proportioned between the immediate and the antecedent.* Too many

* See Chap. III. Sect. 9.

labourers, on the whole, would argue an excess of population; and too large a proportion of antecedent labourers, would just as certainly argue an excess of capital. The one excess is limited by the impossibility of labourers being subsisted beneath a certain rate of wages; and the other excess, as effectually limited by the impossibility of capital being supported beneath a certain rate of profit. Historically, both undergo an increase—but just as the increasing agriculture lets them. Population wont force agriculture beyond a certain limit; but agriculture will ever draw population after it. And the same may be as truly affirmed of capital. It wont force agriculture beyond a certain limit,—and should it, in the moment of its redundancy, seek to do so, it will be sunk or dissipated, and so its excess lopped off. There is a prevalent mistake respecting the order of causation, or the order of antecedency in this matter. It is not an uncommon imagination, that let capital be only accumulated to any extent; and to that extent it will, without let or obstruction, speed on the agriculture. It were far more correct to say, that agriculture opens room for the occupancy of capital.

2. We are not blind to the circumstance, that population, through its excess, and the consequent lowering of wages, opens a way into inferior soils, which, under a higher wage, could not have been entered on—nor to the circumstance that capital, through its excess, and the consequent lowering of profits, causes a similar descent, and so an extension of the agriculture. Even such may be the

redundancy of the former, that, in a general distress for provisions, land may be attempted, from which but a miserable subsistence can be wrested; and such may be the redundancy of the latter, that, in the general difficulty for a profitable investment, land may be attempted, which, instead of sustaining and extending, extinguishes the capital that is put upon it. In this view, both population and capital may be regarded as impellent causes, for hastening forward the progress of agriculture. Yet it is not the object of a wise policy, to stimulate, beyond the natural incitements to their progress, the increase of either. Grant but a state of security and social order—and the spontaneous tendency, whether of population or of capital, is to increase with a rapidity far beyond the movement of that slowly-receding barrier which, ever and anon, is checking the precipitation, and repressing the increase of both. And better, we think, than that either should be urged forward against this barrier, by the inconvenience of a painful excess—better if the secret could be discovered, by which both might be taught to moderate their pace, and to walk in pacific and prosperous advancement, side by side with the natural enlargement of agriculture; that capital, as well as labour, might be saved from those visitations of distress, which are sure to come on both, when alike straitened and overborne, each by the weight of its own undue accumulation.

3. There is a parallel between population and capital, which, if more dwelt upon, would rectify the sanguine and extravagant imaginations, that

are still afloat respecting the power and indefinite capabilities of the latter; seeing they are the very imaginations which at one time prevailed regarding the former. The days once were, when population was the great demand of patriots and political economists; and accordingly, it was held the wisest policy of a state, to encourage early marriages, and raise foundling hospitals, and artificially foster in every sort of way this one element of national greatness. The days still are, when capital is the great demand of politicians and philanthropists; and it is imagined, that by every effort of parsimony, by retrenchment in all directions, whether public or private, by accumulation to the uttermost, we may build up to an indefinite extent, this other element of national greatness. The limits of the first are now understood; and also its own spontaneous tendency to overpass these limits, so as to supersaturate a country, and produce distress among families. The limits of the second are not understood; neither is it seen, how, instead of being the object of an anxious or watchful solicitude on the part of statesmen, it may safely be left to the operation of those natural principles, in virtue of which it is ever tending to its own redundancy, and working by its very excess the infliction of many a heavy misfortune on the capitalists of the land. In this respect there is no difference between immediate and antecedent labour. The one is liable to as great excess as the other. As too many human hands may be working *now*, and drawing in return an inadequate subsistence; so too many human hands may have been

working *last year*, and the existent products of their industry, whether in the shape of goods, or instruments of future production, may be drawing a return of gains that are wholly as inadequate. What the action of low wages is upon population, so the action of low profit is upon capital. They prevent the increase of both beyond a certain amount. Nay, support in the one case may decline into starvation; and population be lessened in consequence,—and profit, in the other case, may be turned into loss, and capital be effectually lessened also.

4. But population and capital not only resemble each other, in respect of the limit which opposes their indefinite augmentation. They are both subject to losses and deficiencies beneath this limit, and they resemble each other in respect of the exceeding force and facility wherewith these deficiencies are repaired. If, by the operation of disease or war, any sudden and large blank have been made in the population, it is now understood how speedily this vacuum is filled again, by the general translation of the families into better circumstances, and the stimulus given from this cause to a number of marriages that would have otherwise been postponed. And, accordingly, an unwonted number of deaths in one year is followed up, as may be seen from the tables of political arithmetic, by a like unwonted number of births, throughout the short period of a few years thereafter. But it is not adverted to, that the deficiencies of capital are repaired by a process still more sudden. Let the whole capital embarked in glass-

making, for example, be a million of money, which, if replaced in one revolution of the economic cycle by eleven hundred thousand pounds, would enable the manufacturers to live, and to commence their course anew, in the same circumstances as before. But we may conceive one of these manufacturers, with the capital of a hundred thousand, to have withdrawn it from business, and to have squandered it in a fit of extravagance, so that, in a few months, there is not a vestige of his fortune remaining. The common imagination is, that the capital thus wasted by the dissipation of one capitalist, can only be repaired by a strenuous parsimony on the part of all the rest. But the truth is, it may be repaired, and that in the course of a single twelvemonth, from another cause. There is nothing, generally speaking, in the extravagance of this said glass-maker, that can affect the wealth or ability of his customers. It may lessen, for one year at least, the quantity prepared, but it lessens not the ability to purchase. If eleven hundred thousand pounds were in readiness last year, for buying up the glass that had been manufactured at the expense of a million, there is nothing, in the wasteful expenditure of one of the capitalists, that can prevent the same sum of eleven hundred thousand pounds from being in readiness next year. The producing power is, for one season, impaired; but the returning power is as great as ever. And the effect is just a rise in the price of the article. When the effective demand is the same as before, the price, averagely speaking, is in the inverse proportion of the quantity brought to market. The

price of eleven hundred thousand pounds, given last year in return for the cost of a million, is given this year in return for the cost of nine hundred thousand. The capital is thus restored to its original magnitude; and that, without any effort or hard straining on the part of the remaining capitalists. The truth is, that to them it has been a prosperous, a holiday season of high prices and flourishing markets. That extravagance which has ruined their brother capitalists, has enriched them. They, in a single year, have fallen both into his profits and his capital. So far from being more painstaking, or penuriously economical than before, they might spend among them the ten thousand pounds which came to him in the shape of revenue, and still inherit the whole of his capital, or the hundred thousand pounds into the bargain. The glass-making capital is fully replaced, not with any sacrifice or self-denial on their part, but at the expense of their customers—and with the temporary mischief to these, of a tenth less of the article of glass than they would otherwise have had, the capital starts again into as great extent and efficiency as before.*

5. It is thus that, in capital, there is a restor-

* Or the capital may be repaired not at the expense of the customers, but at the expense of the manufacturing labourers, who, if they all keep by their wonted employment, must be satisfied for one year with a proportional reduction of their wages. In this way the usual quantity of glass may be supplied at the usual price, but with such a profit from the diminished outlay, as to make up the deficiency which had been created in the capital of glass-makers. This subject is treated at greater length in my work on the Christian and Economic Polity of Nations, Chapter XXII. "On certain prevalent errors and misconceptions, which are fostered by economic theories, and which are fitted to mislead the Legislature, in regard to labour and the labouring classes."

ative virtue, which, as if by the instant force of elasticity, causes it, speedily and spontaneously, to recover the encroachments that have been made upon it. Grant but a secure administration of justice, and a well-regulated social economy, and as certainly as the population of a country follows hard upon its food, so certainly does the capital follow hard upon all that business which, in the existing state of things, it is profitable or possible to carry on it. If in excess, then it over-produces; and, through the medium of consequent low prices, the excess is lopped off in one revolution of the economic cycle. If in defect, then it under-produces; and, through the medium of consequent high prices, the deficiency is repaired in one revolution of the economic cycle. It is thus that, from year to year, the capital may oscillate on each side of the returning power; but the latter is the place to which the former is constantly, though tremulously tending; nor will the vibrations ever go far, or for a great length of time, in either way. The capital, ever adjusting itself to the likely returns, is just the supply ever adjusting itself to the effective demand. And whether that demand be for immediate labour, or for the products of antecedent labour, it will, according to its relative magnitude, act at one time as a check, and at another as an encouragement, on population, or on capital, or on both.

6. The general effect of the reasoning in Dr Smith's Wealth of Nations, (and that notwithstanding his occasional recognitions of the truth,) is to impress the idea, that by accumulation a country

makes unceasing advances, and without any let or hinderance, *ab extra*, in wealth and economic prosperity. It is not mere hoarding that he recommends, but the accumulation of productive capital, or of capital turned to use, and going forth in repeated outlays on the business of production. But to uphold the capital, these outlays must be replaced, which they can only be by the expenditure of those who consume. Mr Malthus, on this, institutes a question respecting the balance between production and expenditure; arguing rightly, that if it was to be no expenditure, the motive to production would cease, and if it was to be all expenditure, the materials and instruments of production would be destroyed.* There must, then, be a line

* "Adam Smith has stated, that capitals are increased by parsimony, that every frugal man is a public benefactor, and that the increase of wealth depends on the balance of produce above consumption. That these propositions are true to a great extent, is perfectly unquestionable. No considerable and continued increase of wealth could possibly take place without that degree of frugality which occasions, annually, the conversion of some revenue into capital, and creates a balance of produce above consumption; but it is quite obvious that they are not true to an indefinite extent, and that the principle of saving, pushed to excess, would destroy the motive to production. If every person were satisfied with the simplest food, the poorest clothing, and the meanest houses, it is certain that no other sort of food, clothing, and lodging, would be in existence; and as there would be no adequate motive to the proprietors of land to cultivate well, not only the wealth derived from conveniences and luxuries would be quite at an end, but if the same divisions of land continued, the production of food would be prematurely checked, and population would come to a stand, long before the soil had been well cultivated. If consumption exceed production, the capital of the country must be diminished, and its wealth must be gradually destroyed, from its want of power to produce; if production be in a great excess above consumption, the motive to accumulate and produce must cease, from the want of will to consume. The two extremes are obvious; and it follows, that

somewhere between production and expenditure, which it were best, on the whole, for a country to observe; but whether it be possible verbally to describe that line or not, practically nature hath, as in the case of population and food, provided both checks and stimulants, in virtue of which the economic machine might, with all safety, be left to its own movements. There is, on the one hand, an appetite for future wealth, and, on the other, an appetite for present indulgence. If either were to take possession of the country, in the shape of a universal mania, it might overturn the balance of society. But just in proportion as either of these forces goes to excess, and so causes a deviation from the line of optimism on one side, in that proportion is the other, or counteractive force, augmented, so as at length to recall the stray movement, and cause an oscillation towards the other side. Should accumulation go to excess, and so the supply in markets overpass the demand, the lowering of profits will check the farther tendency, and the wealthy feel tempted to purchase present enjoyment with the overflowings of their revenue, rather than throw them away on unproductive investments. Should expenditure go to excess, and so the demand in markets overpass the supply, the rise of prices will not only prove a check to farther expenditure, but will tempt the cupidity of capitalists to every possible accumulation, that they may

there must be some intermediate point, though the resources of political economy may not be able to ascertain it, where, taking into consideration both the power to produce, and the will to consume, the encouragement to the increase of wealth is the greatest."—*Malthus' Political Economy*, pp. 8, 9.

multiply and spread out their investments to the uttermost, and so catch, each for himself, as large a share of the current prosperity as he may. It is thus that there are restraining forces in operation, which prevent the extremes either of accumulation or of expenditure from being predominant in the land. The capital never goes to such excess as to annihilate all profit, or that fraction of it—the interest of money. And the expenditure never goes to such excess, as to sweep off capital from any branch of industry where it can be safely or lucratively employed.

7. But instead of one universal mania on the side either of expenditure or accumulation, the former appetite may be in excess with a certain number of individuals in the community, and the latter appetite be in excess with a certain and distinct number of other individuals. This represents the actual state of society, and it may be right to consider for a moment the effect of it. It will be found that expenditure, though in great excess, and that too amongst a great number of people, may not, after all, operate to the extinction, or even to a stay on the proper increase of capital. The truth is, that the love of indulgence in one quarter of society, will ever be sufficiently met by the love of acquisition in another quarter of society, to keep up the capital of the country in an abundantly effective state for producing all, which capitalists find it their advantage and their interest to produce. We can imagine each appetite carried so far, as that one set of men shall spend in extravagance more than their income, and another set

of men shall lay out in business more than their capital. Let us begin with the first supposition; and it might make the effect more palpable, to make use in illustration of large numbers, nor will it affect the validity of our conclusion, though the numbers should be greater than are ever realized. We shall state the income of all our landed proprietors at one hundred millions, and conceive that, in virtue of an extravagant habit amongst them, their whole expenditure is one hundred and ten millions. It matters not to the argument, whether they are enabled to spend this excess of ten millions, by means of a credit directly afforded to them from the dealers from whom they buy, or of a credit afforded to them from men in whose written engagements the country has faith, and whose notes, therefore, have the power which belongs to money, of lifting the commodities for which it is offered in exchange. In either way, ten millions more have been offered, and ten millions more have been received, for the various articles of enjoyment and expense that have been brought to market throughout the year, than otherwise would have been, but for this wasteful extravagance on the part of the landlords. Had new purchasers to the amount of ten millions started up, this addition to the demand would just have raised the money price of all these articles; but not more than does this extended demand of old purchasers. The effect of extravagance, on the part of old customers, is just to raise prices as much, as if the additional purchases had all been made by new customers. There is no waste of productive

capital incurred by this extravagance on the part of landlords. Capitalists may have been carrying on their operations, through one year of this extravagance, in the very same way; and of consequence brought the same quantity of finished goods to market, as if landlords had been spending their incomes only, and no more. And the whole effect of their spending more, is just to raise the price of these goods. If they bring a pecuniary demand to the market, of ten millions more than they ought to have done; this raises prices, and accordingly profits, to the extent of ten millions more than they otherwise would have been. Extravagance does not immediately and of itself increase the quantity of goods brought to market. The individuals who are extravagant, engross a larger quantity of these goods for the year, than would else have come to their share. But they are indulging their love of pleasure at the expense of their own fortune, and also at the expense of the general enjoyment of all other consumers who may keep within their incomes, but have the disadvantage of greater prices, and, consequently, a less amount of enjoyment than they would have had, but for the wasteful expenditure of so many of their fellows. This extravagance for a year leaves the supply unaltered, but, by increasing the demand, raises for that year the price of all the articles on which so much of additional expenditure has been lavished. Landlords have been impoverished to the extent of ten millions by this extravagance; but to that very extent, through the augmentation of price or profit, have capitalists

been enriched by them. As much as they have mortgaged their estates, and thereby reduced their own wealth, so much have they transferred of a lifting power that enables others to purchase land to the whole value of the mortgage. The extravagance of landlords does not have all the effect which is ascribed to it, in the way of reducing the property of the nation. Mainly, its effect is but to transfer the property of the nation. In as far as it keeps up prices and profit, it retards the progress of cultivation among new soils. And so long also as an estate is in the possession of a dissipated proprietor, this may be a temporary let in the way of its improvement. Yet, bating these exceptions, the extravagance of landlords does not produce a *reduction* in the property of the nation, but only a *rotation* of it.*

8. And the effect of overspending on the part of consumers, to raise prices, is neutralized by the effect of overtrading on the part of capitalists, to lower prices. These two opposite vices may prevail to a great extent in society, and that too, from their counteraction of each other, without sensibly impairing the capital, or altering the rate of profit. As there may be an extravagant love of pleasure, leading one man to lay out on present indulgence more than his revenue; so there may be an excessive love of gain, leading another man to excessive speculation, or to lay out, on business, more than his capital. He is enabled to do this by the trust

* By its effect on prices, this ultra expenditure of landlords lessens the share of the annual supply, which would otherwise have fallen to all other customers.

reposed in him, either on the part of those from whom he purchases the various materials of his speculation, or on the part of lenders, who accommodate him with money, or with written engagements, which have the virtue that belongs to money. At all events, if he purchase more than he ought, to that extent he raises the price of the things purchased, and so the cost of the articles which he manufactures, or of the articles in which he deals. But he furthermore pours a larger supply of these articles into market, and so far reduces their selling price. For every new adventurer, who enters any walk of commercial enterprise, or for every old capitalist, who has already entered it, and become more adventurous than before, the cost of the commodity is proportionally raised, and its price proportionally lowered. This soon meets with its corrective in bankruptcies and losing speculations, by which some are driven from the trade altogether; and only those whose fortunes are reduced, but not annihilated, can keep possession of the field.*

* The problem suggested by Mr Malthus, in the passage which we have extracted at sect. 6., of this chapter, meets with its readiest solution, by connecting it with the influence which an increase of production on the one hand, or of consumption on the other, has on cultivation. The more that production prevails over consumption, as in peaceable, and industrious, and well-regulated communities, the more do prices, and therefore profits fall, so as to carry down the cultivation among poorer soils, and by enlarging the agricultural produce, or the maintenance of labour, to make the country richer in all the products of labour. This will meet with its effectual check, when this superiority of production over consumption, with its effect on profit, is carried so far, that the last returns, whether from agriculture or any other business, do not yield what has been called a living profit. On the other hand, in those countries where the consumption or

9. In the matter of population, and consequently of wages, there may be a balance between the improvidence of many individuals on the one hand, who rush precipitately into marriage, and the licentious celibacy of many on the other hand, who, though entitled by the sufficiency of their circumstances to enter upon this state, prefer a life of dissipation. The one excess may so neutralize the other, as to produce betwixt them no aggregate effect upon the population; but better, certainly, that neither excess obtained, and that the same result were brought about, by the avoidance alike of profligacy, and of premature marriages. So in the matter of capital, and consequently of profits, there may be a balance between the extravagance of many individuals on the one hand, and the reckless temerity of many commercial speculatists on the other. And the one excess may so neutralize the other, as to produce betwixt them no aggregate effect upon profit. But better too, in this instance, that neither the one excess nor the other did obtain; that no man spent beyond his income, and no man speculated beyond the fair and honest likelihoods of the business he was engaged with. It may cause no sensible difference to the two great public and economic interests of profit and wages; but there is involved in it a momentous difference to the worth of individual character, and the com-

expenditure bears a greater proportion to the production, as in demi-barbarous, and unsettled, and oppressed communities, where profit and the interest of money are high, the cultivation is proportionally contracted; and wealth, as being mainly dependent on the amount of agricultural produce, is contracted along with it.

fort of families. We feel no dread anticipation of national loss, either from profuse expenditure or from excessive speculation. But both habits are much to be deprecated, as being alike unfavourable to private virtue and happiness. And both these excesses may in fact be realized by the same individual—in whom the appetite for gain, and the appetite for indulgence, may meet together in hurtful and vicious combination. This we often find exemplified in the present age; when splendid extravagance is followed by splendid bankruptcy, out of the wrecks and ashes of which there suddenly ariseth a phœnix as splendid as before. But we deem that all the liberalities of such an age, form no equivalent for those virtues of more severe and unbending aspect, which flourished in other days; when the good old temperament of hard and honest, sat more conspicuously than they do now on the visage of plodding and painstaking, but withal well-conditioned and well-principled citizens; and when, sturdy and well-built in all the cardinal virtues, the grandfathers of our present race, with their homely fare and their primitive habits, were still uninfected by the vice and vanity of modern times. This we deem to have been better and wholesomer far, than is a commerce of proud and precarious adventure; and we do indeed hold the passions, and the profligacies, and the gaming artifices of her now deeper play, to be wretchedly atoned for, by all the gaudy efflorescence of her pageant style, and her mushroom palaces.

10. We may with all safety conclude then, that, under the protection of equitable law, capital is

sure to maintain itself fully up to the state at which it is most beneficial; and even tends to go beyond this. When reduced by any cause beneath this standard, it evinces the same restorative force as that which belongs to the element of population. The increase of the one need be no more the subject of demand or anxiety, than that of the other. The expenditure in excess of mere customers, as of landed proprietors, does not lessen capital. It but raises money prices, and so the very extravagance which mortgages the land to the extent of ten millions, transfers the power of purchasing, to that extent, to some other quarter in society, and thus occasions a mere change or division in property, without a diminution of it. The expenditure of capitalists themselves may lessen capital, but the operation of a high profit almost instantly recovers it, just as when disease or war lessens population, the operation of a high wage is to act as a stimulus to marriage; and so bring, in a little time, the number of the people up to the means of their subsistence. There is no artificial fostering requisite for the upholding of either. Each may with all safety be left to itself, and the danger is as small, that we shall not have enough of antecedent, as that we shall not have enough of immediate labour. The less of population to the food, the more is there of plenty among labourers. The less of capital to the business, the more is there of profit among capitalists. But neither will the food remain long in excess, nor the profit in excess. With both there is a rapid tendency to excess the other way; that is, to an excess of population on

the one hand, and an excess of capital on the other. It is not by the deficiency of these, but by the redundancy of these, that distress and inconvenience begin to be felt, first, among the labourers, secondly, among their employers. There is no need for exciting, beyond the operation of its own spontaneous forces, an increase of the supply of immediate labour; for, in truth, it is the oversupply of this, that, by the lowering of wages, spreads discomfort among the people. And there is just as little need for exciting, beyond the operation of its own spontaneous forces, an increase of the supply of antecedent labour; for it is the oversupply of this, which, by the lowering, or the destruction of profits, turns merchandise into a desperate game, and spreads disorder among capitalists.

11. We hear much from the economists of ruinous extravagance. Now, individual landlords, and individual capitalists, will find it ruinous to themselves; but it is only because the extravagance of the former causes a rotation of wealth, by which it is moved away from them, and because the extravagance of the latter causes first a destruction, and then an almost instant replacement of wealth, which springs up in other hands. Meanwhile, and notwithstanding the play of these yearly oscillations, the property and capital of the nation abide in unimpaired magnitude. But the general fancy is, that if there have been a defalcation of capital, through the extravagance of some, it is repaired through the parsimony and painful accumulation of others. Instead of which, it is

repaired, and that almost *per saltum*, not by means of parsimony on the part of capitalists, but by means of high prices for a year, which is tantamount, we admit, to a privation for that time on the part of customers. Never are capitalists more exempted from the duties and the cares of frugality, than when this restorative process is going on; for to them it is a season of hey-day prosperity, wherein, without any change of habit, or rather, notwithstanding an increase, if they so choose, of expenditure and luxury, the capital, wasted or withdrawn from business by others, comes back, with almost instant reflux, upon themselves. They, without effort, fall into possession of the ground which the others had abandoned, and find it as full of capital, and as productive of revenue, as before. It is all an enlargement to them; and at no time was this more apparent, than when the borrowing system, by government, was in full activity; producing, therefore, a yearly extinction of capital, and yet closely followed up by its yearly regeneration. It was not regenerated, as Dr Smith imagines, by parsimony, but by a rise of profits. The twenty millions, borrowed one year, and withdrawn from the business of production, just by the inverse action of supply upon prices, were replaced next year, to the great and sudden enrichment of all the monied and mercantile interests in the land. And the same loan to government, if repeated for ten years, would just be followed by the same effect; that is, a season of this duration distinguished by its high prices, and so by its high profits. The reality of this process stands palpably forth to ob-

servation in the price of stocks—which fall in war sometimes to half of their value in peace; and indicating, therefore, no less than a double rate of profit. This will suffice to account for the full maintenance of the capital of a nation, notwithstanding the repeated drafts on that capital by borrowing. The lenders withdraw their fortunes from business, and virtually become mortgagees upon the land; having their interest paid by a perpetual tax, that falls upon the country, and we think upon the landlords. The capitals which remain in trade are then suddenly enlarged, by the impulse given to profits. The perfect sufficiency of this capital for the business of the nation, even under all the encroachments to which it is subjected by government loans, is abundantly obvious; and is ascribed, by Dr Smith, to the compensation by the savings in one class of the community for the squanderings of another. But the true explanation is, that it arises from the high prices to which the community at large are subjected; it being, in truth, a season of privation to them, while a season of feverish prosperity to manufacturers and merchants. And, meanwhile, the expenditure does not diminish the property of the nation; it only transfers a part, and so divides it. The land is as good as partitioned between the landed proprietors and the national creditors, who are the mortgagees. Should the debt overtake the wealth of our proprietors—should the mortgage equal the value of the land, and still justice be scrupulously adhered to, there would be no disappearance of property in consequence; there would only be

the dispossession of existing proprietors. Landlords would have to do generally, in consequence of the extravagance of government, what they have often to do severally, in consequence of their own individual extravagance. They would have to renounce their estates in favour of their creditors; when, as we have already said, the ultimate effect of the expenditure would be found, not in the main to have been a reduction of property, but only a rotation of it.

12. Dr Smith mourns over our national debt, as if, by each successive act of its extension, the country had been thrown permanently back in the career of economic prosperity. It has been computed by some, how much more populous we should have been, had the practice of inoculation been discovered sooner; and, in like manner, he computes how much richer we should have been, had the different sums borrowed by government been all retained as capital. But the truth is, that it never could have stood as capital. The effect of the debt, while under its process of formation, was to subject the people to higher prices, and so to a scantier supply of all the comforts of life. Had there been no formation of a debt, and the people been left to their wonted supply of these articles, they would just have made all the larger use of them; and if not, there would have been an excess of capital beyond what the country could bear, and so an absorption of this excess, in the losses and the bankruptcies of over-trading. The whole effect of the debt at the time of its contraction, is to expose the people to those higher prices, which

have both to return the abiding, and to replace the withdrawn capital. And the whole effect of the debt afterwards, is to divide property, just as a mortgage divides it between the creditor and the landed proprietor. We look to the wrong quarter for its effect, when we look for a diminished capital. The truth is, that while this borrowing system lasted, capital was upheld in full extent and sufficiency; and when the borrowing system terminated, capital, unprovided with its wonted vent or absorbent, went to dissipation, in the overflow of its own exuberance. It was felt to be a paradox at the time; but we think it admits of lucid explanation, that capitalists flourished in war, and that in peace they suffered the reaction of many adversities and losses.*

13. It is readily enough perceived, how soon the population of a country recovers from the effects of a desolating war; and how, with its agriculture and its seasons unchanged, it witnesses, in a few years, an equal number of equally thriving families. But there is just as great vigour and indestructibility in the element of capital; which, though wrecked to the uttermost by victorious armies, will, in the course of a few years, attain to all the magnitude, and all the efficiency, which it ever had. If, by the multiplication of labourers, the country will soon have enough of population; then, simply by a right distribution of them into the immediate and antecedent, the country will almost as soon have enough of capital. And this distribution may, with all safety, be left to the guidance of individual

* See Appendix, D.—On the National Debt.

interest. The first effect of the lessened capital would be a lessened production; and in repairing this, the chief and foremost efforts would, of course, be directed to those things that were of most urgent necessity. Hence a greater than ordinary proportion of the people would be set to repair the deficiency of food, who, between their immediate and antecedent labour, would speedily put the fields into their wonted order, and give their wonted completeness to the instruments of husbandry. After this had been achieved, the great and extraordinary effort would then be transferred to the manufacture of second necessaries; for that would now be the quarter of greatest demand, and at the same time deficiency; and where, therefore, under the encouragement of highest price, capital would be most readily allured, or rather, most quickly forced up to its original magnitude. And so this matter would proceed, till, in a very few years, the recovery both of population and of capital would be completed. By one revolution of the economic cycle, what is termed *the circulating capital* would be nearly restored; and by a few revolutions more, what is termed the *fixed capital* would be fully restored; and all this, not by the parsimony of successive generations, but by the privations of a very few successive seasons. It has been a theme of wonder to historians, that, after the most sanguinary and destructive wars, a country should so fast emerge again into its wonted prosperity and strength. Like the mysterious sanative principle in the human body, it has had a mysterious appellation given to it, and been ascribed to an unknown

vis medicatrix in the body politic. But such a disguise for ignorance is altogether unneeded; for there is no mystery whatever in the process. It is all due to the action of forces perfectly understood, however little applied to the explanation of the phenomena in question. The effect of a high profit on a deficient capital, may be just as lucidly apprehended as the effect of a high wage on a deficient population. They, in a very short time, cease to be deficient. The facts of history upon this subject are notoriously in accordance with the principles of science; nor should we any longer marvel, why Russia, and Prussia, and Austria, and France, after having, to all appearance, exhausted each other, should, in less than half a generation, be able to renew their conflicts in as great force and fulness as before.

14. It is in old and well-governed countries where capital is most exposed to the discomfiture of its attempts for its own enlargement. It is in these where profit has sunk to the lowest state that is consistent with the maintenance of capital; and where, therefore, if capital were farther extended, the profit might be annihilated, or even converted into loss. A country, though well governed, yet if new, may have its profits high, because of the unbroken tracts which yet lie open for cultivation, as in the United States of America; and on which the exuberance of capital may overflow, and find profitable investments for generations to come. And a country, though old, yet if ill governed, may also have its profits high. The insecurity to which all property is exposed, from injustice and

violence, will prevent the wealthy, in such countries, from exposing their capital, without the promise of a considerable return. The high profit is an indemnification for risk; and should be equal to the ordinary profit in ordinary circumstances, with a premium, over and above, for a very hazardous insurance. In balancing the matter between the value of a present indulgence, and that of a future acquisition, the uncertainty attendant on the latter, will tempt merchants to give a larger proportion of their gains to expenditure; and this, by keeping down their capital, upholds their profit. It is in perfect accordance with this, that, in countries under oppression, the cultivation should have made so short a descent among the inferior soils. The same consideration which operates in restraining the application of mercantile, will also operate in restraining the application of agricultural capital; the latter of which requires, as much as the former, the inducement of a large return in barbarous or demi-barbarous countries. Hence the prodigious capability of soils that lie without the margin of cultivation, in far the greater number of countries in the world—in Asia Minor, in South America, in Hindostan, along the Northern shores of Africa, and, generally speaking, in all territories under the Mahometan yoke. This holds out the brilliant perspective of a great enlargement in the physical resources of the human family, as being the sure attendant of their growth in morality, and religion, and social order. Even the larger countries of civilized Europe have still this prospect in reserve for them; as is evident from the higher interest of

money, in conjunction with the yet imperfect agriculture of such countries as Spain, and Austria, and Russia, and Poland. Perhaps there is no first-rate nation so near, in this respect, to its extreme limit as Britain, that has long been the seat of pure legislation, and of safe and prosperous industry. There, a low interest, a high-wrought agriculture, the distress both of a redundant population among the labourers, and of a redundant capital among the mercantile classes, go hand in hand. Ireland, with its higher interest of money, and its less perfect agriculture, has yet a career of greater advancement to describe than there is now room for in this country. One of the recipes often given for the medication of that interesting land, is to pour capital into it. But this is mistaking the consequence for the cause. The economic will follow spontaneously in the train of the moral improvement. With the progress of education, and law, and industry, capital will naturally be attracted hither; and, what is still better, a capital of home-growth augmentation will speedily be formed. Their slovenly agriculture, and unreclaimed wastes, are to us the materials of a cheering anticipation; for they tell how large are the still undeveloped capabilities of Ireland. The redundancy of the Irish population, is only, as compared not with the potential, but with the actual amount and distribution of their produce, an amount which might be doubled with a better system of husbandry; and a distribution which will become more thoroughly internal than at present, when landlords begin to feel, that on their own estates, and among their

own peasantry, they may taste the charm and tranquillity of home. It is competent for moral causes, and for these alone, to effect every desirable amelioration; and, if man would but do his part, nature has in store for Ireland a liberal subsistence for millions more of human beings than are now famishing upon its territory.

15. If the disease in Ireland be a plethora of population, the disease in this country is more like to a plethora of capital. If there, the mendicity be among the living instruments; here, if I may be permitted such an image, the mendicity is among the dead instruments of labour. If there, immediate labour be wretchedly remunerated by a low wage; here, the low profit makes a wretched remuneration for antecedent labour. The phenomena on this side of the water indicate as surely that capital has its limits, as the phenomena on the other side indicate that population has its limits. The annoyance one feels in the competition of porters for employment, is not more decisive of the one, than the annoyance he is exposed to from the competition of steam-boats or hackney-coaches is decisive of the other. The noisy clamour of beggars on the street, does not tell more significantly of an excess of population, than the signs of unoccupied houses, and the flaming advertisements of commodities at prime cost, and the incessant cheapening of articles to the bankruptcy and ruin of their owners, tell by another sort of clamour of the excess of capital. Between the two elements, in fact, there is a marvellous and multiplied accordancy. Both are subject to incessant checks from

the want, each of its own proper aliment; the one from an insufficient wage, the other from an insufficient profit. And though both are greatly short, at present, of that magnitude which they may yet attain in the course of ages; both may press at all times on a slowly-retiring limit—nor is there room in the world for the indefinite extension of either.

Note.

The analogies between population and capital, as stated in § 3 of this chapter, confirm the doctrine of the previous chapter, on the necessary limit to the extension of capital. This is made still more obvious, when capital is viewed as the produce of antecedent in contradistinction to immediate labour. We feel the great importance of that restorative power, § 4, which brings up capital almost *per saltum* to what it originally was, after having undergone losses or diminutions from whatever cause. And the effect of extravagance on prices; with the corollary deduced therefrom in § 7, is particularly urged on the consideration of the reader, —as it may lead him to modify the conclusions of Dr Smith in the way we have attempted to do in § 11. It will be seen how it is that the borrowing system has not trenched either on the capital or business of the nation—and that capital is upholden under it, not by the extraordinary savings, but the extraordinary profits to which it gives rise. The precise economic effect of the National Debt is stated in § 12, and shown to be any thing rather

than a diminished capital. We can think of no explanation for the historical phenomena mentioned in § 13, but on the principles expounded in this chapter—though to us the most interesting aspect of the whole, is the influence, § 14, which the moral state of a country, and more especially its progress in civilization and law, has on the extension of its capital and wealth.

CHAPTER V.

On the Possibility of Over-Production, or of a General Glut.

1. By our division of labourers into three classes, we are enabled to refute the modern paradox, of the impossibility of over-production, or the impossibility of a general glut. They who maintain this doctrine, represent what they term unproductive consumption, or unproductive expenditure, as an injury to the nation. They know, that though all wealth were turned into capital, there would just be as much expenditure as before; but it would be expenditure on the tools and materials, or on the maintenance of industry. Instead of spending my income of a thousand guineas in the year, it is certainly possible to stint myself to fifty pounds; and either directly, or through the medium of a loan, I may spend a thousand pounds annually in the employment of labourers, who shall work up a return for the maintenance bestowed on them. It is in virtue of this return, that the latter mode of spending a thousand pounds, has, in opposition to the former, been termed productive expenditure, when viewed as coming from the hands of the employer; or productive consumption, if viewed as going to the maintenance of so many workmen and their families. And their workmanship is the product—a product that we should not have had, if the owner of the sum, instead of giving it the sup-

posed destination, had spent it on his own personal or family indulgences.

2. The thing wanted, therefore, by these new economists, is, that each man, laying out as much as possible of his income on productive expenditure, should lay out as little as possible on his own individual enjoyments. And this can certainly be done, till the man reduce himself to the necessaries of life. This is the extreme limit of the possibility in regard to him; and the extreme limit in regard to the country at large, might be reached by all men of wealth, higher than that of a labourer, doing the same thing; that is, confining themselves to the use of necessaries, and spending the surplus, not in the purchase of existent products for their own and their families further enjoyment, but in the maintenance of workmen whom they put to the formation of new products. At this rate it is obvious, that all luxuries would be proscribed. These products would fall out of demand, and cease to be fabricated. The men now employed in their fabrication would still continue to be supported, and by the same people too—only, instead of being supported by them in the act of spending their revenue on the old and customary products, they would be supported by them in the act of laying out that revenue, now turned into capital, on the manufacture of new products. And these products, in virtue of this universal change that had taken place in expenditure, behoved to be either the first or second necessaries; seeing that, when society was brought to this state of alleged optimism, all men behoved to confine themselves

to the use of necessaries, and devote the surplus of their incomes to that production, which it is impossible by this new doctrine to carry to excess. That this new production should be a production of luxuries, after the use of luxuries has been thus proscribed, and banished from the land, is surely out of the question. If production at all, it must be that of the first and second necessaries. In other words, by this change, the disposable population would be, not destroyed, but transferred. The class would be destroyed,—but the men who compose it would be supported, and as well supported as before, in other employments; or merged into the other two classes of agricultural and secondary labourers.

3. By tracing the effect of such a change in the habit of expenditure, (were it possible, which it is not, that such a change could be realized,) we shall find that it would be productive of no real benefit or blessing to society. We might perhaps satisfy ourselves with the certainty, that it is a thing not to be done,—but we hold it of importance furthermore to know, that it is a thing not to be desiderated. At all events it will be found, in the course of the investigation, that this new doctrine, of the impossibility of a general glut, is altogether a chimera. And, like many other important lessons in political economy, we think that this one too can best be learned at the extremity of cultivation, —at the limit of a country's food, beyond which it is utterly impossible to carry any one economic interest, that is dependent either on the number of human beings, or on the industry of human hands.

4. First, then, let us imagine that the farmer, in any given state of the husbandry, lays out, and persists in laying out, the uttermost he possibly can, on the business of that production wherewith he has to do. There can be no doubt, that the less he spends upon himself, and the more he spends upon his business, the faster will he carry out upon his land the limit of cultivation. Even when he has reached that soil, which can yield no more than his profit, over and above the food of its direct and secondary labourers, he may still persevere in making a surrender of that profit; and instead of consuming it on his own enjoyments, may continue to put it out on the expenses of a further cultivation. With this determined sacrifice, year after year, of all the profits of his husbandry, he will not only carry out the cultivation at a faster rate, but he will carry it further than he could otherwise have done. He may be obliged to stop at last, when he comes to a soil which yields him no profit, and which can barely feed the agricultural labourers and their secondaries; but yet he stops at a line ulterior to that which would have bounded his progress, had he been in the habit of spending the profits upon his family, instead of sinking them upon his farm. The land last entered on, would be further down in the gradation of qualities of soil, because it would have less to do; having only to yield the food of its direct and indirect labourers, instead of having both to yield that much, and a profit to the cultivator besides. This attempt, then, at production, on the part of the farmer, to the uttermost of his power—this surrender of his

own profits to the cause, must give a certain stretch to cultivation, and be the means of reclaiming a belt that would have otherwise remained on the exterior of the domain of cultivation. There would have been room thus afforded for a larger, but not certainly on that account for a happier or a richer population. Their comfort, in fact, depending as it does, not on the absolute quantity of food, but on the relation which the quantity bears to their own number; and this, again, depending on their own standard of taste and of enjoyment,—all that the extreme parsimony of the farmer can work out for us, is a bulkier, but not a better-conditioned society than before; a greater number of families, but these not at all more thriving families than they were formerly. Let us state truly the effect of this straining after production, with all his might and all his means, on the part of the cultivator. He annihilates his own profit by it. He adds something to the magnitude of the commonwealth. He adds nothing to the prosperity or comfort of the individuals who compose it.

5. It seems needless to make a distinct argument, for it is essentially the same, on the case of another species of capitalist; even him who heads, and who by his funds sustains, the manufacture of second necessaries. He, too, like his brother agriculturist, may, in his zeal for production, choose to live as a labourer, and to embark all profit on the enlargement of his concern. The consequence would be a larger supply of second necessaries, and such a consequent cheapening of them, that profit should be annihilated. We have already

demonstrated how this, too, would give a stretch to cultivation. It would, *pro tanto*, have the same effect, in this way, that we ascribed to the cheapening of second necessaries, by an improvement in the machinery employed to prepare them. It would not of itself lessen the number of secondary labourers requisite for this preparation. The last land would still have to feed the same number of these. But it would have no longer to feed the disposable population, that wont to be employed in the preparation of luxuries for the manufacturing capitalist. He, by the supposition, has given up this idle expenditure, and embarked all the proceeds of his retrenchment on the extension of his business. The effect of thus freeing the last land from the burden of subsisting so many as would have been otherwise required of it, is just to enable the cultivator to make a step down to worse land. By this change in the habit of the capitalist, a few of the disposable class would be transferred, as in the former case, to the business of a now more extended agriculture; and, with the consequent increase of population, to the business of a then proportionally extended manufacture of second necessaries. In both cases, there might be a temporary enlargement of comfort to labourers. But this, so long as the standard of enjoyment remained the same, would soon be followed up, and therefore compensated, by an increase of population. And so the result of this second effort at an indefinite production, would come, like the first, to a very definite and limited result. It would annihilate profit. It would add something to the magnitude

of the commonwealth. It would ultimately, or permanently, add nothing to the prosperity and comfort of its individual families.

6. But the extension of agriculture that would ensue from capitalists, whether agricultural or manufacturing, giving up their profits, is as nothing to the extension that would ensue from landed proprietors giving up their rents in the cause. We need not make a separate case of the capitalists employed in the manufacture of luxuries,—for the most which they could surrender to the object of increasing production, is the profits of their business. But were their great customers, the landlords, to be enlisted in this warfare against all unproductive expenditure, they could, by giving up the use of whatever is superfluous, turn, not merely the profit made on luxuries, but the whole price of luxuries, to the purposes of capital. The most that capitalists could do, by a yearly sinking of their profits, would be to carry down the cultivation to the soil that barely feeds the labourers, directly and secondarily employed on it. But landlords, by a yearly sinking of their rents, could do a great deal more ; could make, in fact, the cultivation pass a very far way beyond this line among the deficient soils.* With the exception of their own essential maintenance, which they might reduce to that of labourers, they could turn the whole of their immense revenues into capital, for the object of production ; though, from

* We name those the deficient soils whose produce is insufficient for the subsistence of their direct and secondary labourers.

the universal change which we now suppose in the state of the demand, it behoved to be the production of first and second necessaries. Of course, the present employments of the disposable population would be completely broken up, and we should behold them spread in immense numbers over the deficient soils of the territory,—where they would be supported, partly by the scanty and inadequate returns of their penurious husbandry; but this made up by the successive outlays of that revenue which landlords drew from their superior soils. In effect, this scheme of production, to the uttermost, would give rise to the very same distribution, and be attended by the same consequences, with a scheme of home-colonization carried to the uttermost. The landlords would only be denuded of their revenues in a somewhat different capacity; not in that of philanthropists or leypayers, but in the capacity of over-traders. The ultimate effect of that system which the enemies of unproductive expenditure so strenuously recommend, supposing it carried to the uttermost, would be a regular yearly investiture of all the superfluous revenue of landlords; and that followed up, by as regular a yearly loss to them of the whole sums invested. There would not be the extinction of rent from the superior soils; but there would be the absorption of it on the deficient soils. There would be the extinction of a disposable population. There would be a considerable increase of the general population; but with this addition to the number, there would most assuredly be no addition to the comfort of families. With the surrender of luxu-

ries on the part of the landlords, agriculture could be carried a great way beyond its natural limit; yet it is not illimitable. When the last luxury had been given up, and the last man been withdrawn from the disposable population, then would agriculture reach the farthest possible barrier which nature and necessity had laid in the way of its extension—as the beach, or the sandy desert, or the impracticable rock, or the climate of eternal frost, within which no esculent can be reared.

7. Our first remark on this process of indefinite parsimony, and of laying forth to the uttermost on production, is, that it never can be realized. We have endeavoured to trace its effects; but we are quite sure, all the while, that they never can be exemplified. Capitalists will not persist in stinting themselves to the bare necessaries of life, and laying out the whole surplus of their profits on the extension of their business, when they come to find, that, after all, these profits are at length annihilated. Landlords will not persist in foregoing such indulgences as might be spared, if they come to find, that any returns which might be made only go to make out the support of an increasing population, instead of coming back in the shape of additional wealth, and additional command over the enjoyments of life to themselves. No man would continue to superintend the operations of a capital, no man would continue to administer and manage the affairs of a landed property, if such were to be the result of it. The moving forces which actuate, and which lead either to the operations of merchandise, or to the arrangements of agriculture,

would cease, on this system of production to the uttermost, and of no consumption save for the object of production. If such a system were once entered on, it would speedily be checked by its profitless, and, in many instances, by its positively losing and ruinous results. So that it is not in opposition to any apprehended practical evil, but in opposition to a theory, that we have been induced to frame, or at all to insist on our present argument.

8. But even though practicable, we should hold it to be a process not at all desirable. That it would hasten the progress of agriculture, and so the growth of society in respect of population, is very certain. With a less amount of frugality in times past, we should have had, at this moment, a narrower domain of cultivation; and a domain so much the larger and more productive, had there been greater frugality, even though many owners and occupiers of land had starved or ruined themselves in the cause. There can be no doubt, that cultivation has often received a permanent stretch at the expense of an irrecoverable loss to the individual cultivator; and that, better than this, instances can be named, where, but for a large outlay on the part of owners, there are many extended improvements, at length yielding an ample, though distant return, which might have been postponed or never undertaken. Yet, with all these admissions, while we should deprecate the encroachments, by waste and extravagance, on agricultural capital; we should also deprecate the encroachments by parsimony, on the general habit of capitalists living

in the enjoyment of their profits, and land-owners in the enjoyment of their rents. For ourselves, we have no fear whatever of the former encroachment, and would again advert to that beautiful compensation, by which the excessive love of present enjoyment on the part of spendthrifts, when carried to the length of abridging their capital, does, by its effect on supply and price, call forth a counteractive force in the opposite direction—by inviting others in whom the love of gain predominates, the more to extend their operations, whether in trade or in husbandry. We have no alarm for the effect of economic theories on the habit of individuals; but even though they had the influence, which they have not, we should hold it a thing to be regretted, if they led our capitalists either to spend more, or to spare more, than they would spontaneously. We should rather confide the progress of agriculture to the improvement of its own machinery, and its own methods, than hasten that progress unnaturally by an extreme parsimony, whether among the owners or the occupiers of land. We have no demand for a forced increase either of food or population; neither do we look on that system as being at all friendly to our species, which, by an abridgment on the free control of every man over his own revenue, would either speed the advances of cultivation beyond the rate at which it might otherwise proceed, or carry it beyond the boundary at which it would otherwise stop. The final result of such a system, when consummated and brought to its perfection, were an agriculture carried not merely to the limit beyond which it could not produce so

much as pay its own expenses, but to the limit beyond which it could not produce at all. Our preference is for an agriculture that stopped at the upper extremity of the deficient soils, rather than an agriculture that did not stop till it reached their lower extremity. In very proportion to the progress made among the deficient soils, are profits and rent encroached upon, and the disposable class dwindles away by successive abridgments, till the last man is transferred to the agricultural or the secondary. We repeat, that we have no value for such a consummation; and, infinitely rather than this ultra agrarianism, would we have a more limited, because, along with this, we should also have the composition and the materials of a more secure and far happier society. We see not the good of an addition to the mere numbers of the commonwealth, if it can only be effected at the expense of the whole, and to the utter ruin of certain great interests which cannot otherwise be provided for than with a disposable population; implying, no doubt, the means of leisure and luxury to an opulent class, but implying also, beside a thousand bland and beneficent influences on the comfort and moral state of all classes, an ability on the part of the ruling power, to appropriate of these means for all the best and highest objects of an enlightened patriotism.

9. This is a great question; and something of far mightier import than the maintenance of a rank and a property for the upper classes is involved in the determination of it. We hold that, on the moment when agriculture overpasses its natural

limit, and enters on the deficient soils, the condition of the general peasantry is put into a state of fearful precariousness. And it matters not whether this shall happen by a scheme of home-colonization for the purposes of charity, or by the schemes and speculations of over-trading, either for the sake of a profit that wont be realized, or on the false system, that all unproductive expenditure is ruinous. If the first, or an undertaking of charity for the good of others, we can prove, that though it may land us in a greater, it will land us also in a more wretched population.* If the second, or an undertaking of business for the good of ourselves, it cannot long be persisted in under a continued experience of the losses which are incurred by it; and it is always to the distress of multitudes, when any enterprise of industry, because of its unproductiveness, behoves to be abandoned. We therefore deem it an alternative altogether big with efficacy on the ultimate condition of our species, whether they shall keep within the natural limit, or, breaking through among the deficient soils, push onward to the extreme limit of the agriculture. Our preference is wholly, and that for the sake of the prosperity of all classes, to the former term of this alternative. We should rather the liberal consumption of their rents, than the yearly absorption of them in losing schemes of husbandry, on the part of the landed proprietors. We should rather a high rate of profit, upheld by a large expenditure on the part of capitalists, than the utter degradation of this class by a parsimony that would anni-

* Again see the Appendix, C.

hilate profit, and sink their condition to that of the general population; even although this larger expenditure and larger profit did somewhat retard the progress of agriculture. And we should infinitely rather, on the part of labourers, behold them keeping within the superior soils, in more limited number, but in larger sufficiency, than flowing over on the deficient soils, and there bringing down, by the very weight of their redundancy, the state and circumstances of the whole order to which they belong. We are sensible that, at this rate, we should have a more contracted agriculture, and therefore a less populous world; but our preference is for a higher wage and higher profit too, with a narrower, rather than a lower wage and profit with a wider cultivation. It is at the natural limit of cultivation, that we should feel disposed to take our most resolute stand—assured as we are, that if the attempt to pass beyond it be, from whatever cause, largely and systematically prosecuted, a general want and wretchedness among labourers or capitalists, or both, would follow in its train.

10. But it is now time for addressing ourselves to the argument of our more recent economists, for the impossibility of a general glut, in the terms which they themselves have employed when propounding it. Their reason for there being no such thing as over-production, or for a general glut being impossible, is, that any partial over-stockings of the market which may accrue, arise, not from an excess of commodities upon the whole, but from the excess of certain commodities, and so a wrong or mistaken distribution of them. They ground

their proposition on the indefiniteness of human wants, or rather, of human desires, in virtue of which, they affirm, there can be no excess in the supply, if known only what the desires specially are. The mal-adjustment in the market, according to them, has arisen, not from the desires of men being over-satiated with too many objects, but from these desires not being met by the right objects. If, for example, there be an excessive quantity of cotton goods in the market, they become immoderately cheap, and purchase less than they otherwise would, of all other commodities, which of course are, in reference to this one commodity, immoderately dear. This must proceed, it is argued, from an excess of labour employed in the preparation of cotton goods, and a corresponding deficiency of labour in the preparation of the other articles which come into exchange with them. Had a certain portion of labour, then, been transferred from that quarter where it has been in excess, to those quarters in which it has been deficient, the equilibrium would have been restored, and the cotton goods been exchanged, with all others, at a fair relative value. At this rate, there would have been no glut of any one commodity; and yet the quantity of commodities on the whole would have been as large as ever. On these grounds it is contended, that there can be no glut arising from over-production in the general, but only from a miscalculation as to the real state of the demand; and so a disproportionately large supply of certain articles of merchandise, with a corresponding defect and diminution in the supply of others.

11. Now, in the first place, it must be obvious, that so long as the food of a country is ahead of its population, there is no danger of such a general glut extending to all commodities, as shall produce general distress among labourers; and less danger than otherwise, of such a partial glut in some of them, as shall bring distress to certain classes of labourers. The holders of this food, are the holders of that which is the chief ingredient in the maintenance of families; and, holding it in excess, there can be no doubt, on the average, of an ample remuneration for the products of manufacturing industry. Even should the first holders, the landed proprietors, confine themselves exclusively to the use of certain favourite commodities, and neglect the others; by their more intense demand for the former, they raise their price, and transfer to the venders of certain articles the whole of that surplus food, which might have otherwise been distributed among the venders of all articles. But after this food, or, which is the same thing, the power of lifting it, has been placed in the hands of the second holders, the fortunate calculators on the taste of the original ones, there will still be a surplus to them, the whole food being in excess to the population, which, rather than left to moulder in their own idle possession, will find its way either to such articles as can be found, or to the purchase of labour for the preparation of other articles. It is thus that, in the state now supposed, the products of industry will seldom miss being exchanged with a liberal maintenance to workmen; or, at all events, workmen will seldom miss of a liberal maintenance.

Capitalists may suffer a diminution in their gains, or even a positive loss, by miscalculation. But, in a general excess of food, this will not affect the general comfort of labourers; as exemplified now in America, and as perhaps exemplified in various stages in the enlargement of European agriculture, since the termination of the middle ages.

12. But periods of general comfort are periods of frequent and early marriages; and so of more frequent, as well as larger families. An increasing population follows in the train of increasing food, and at length overtakes and presses on it. That the pressure be felt, even long before the agriculture has come to its uttermost perfection, it is enough if the rate of increase in the population exceed the rate of increase in the means of subsistence. The nearer the agriculture is to its extreme limit, the pressure will be the more felt; and it will be greatest of all, when, instead of a slowly-receding barrier, the food of the country has reached its maximum, and the barrier has become stationary. Hence the straitness that is felt in the old countries of Europe, as marked by the tide of emigration, compared with America; where vast tracts of yet unbroken land await the enterprise of adventurers, and afford additional harbourage for additional millions of families. It is in the former countries, where those gluts, which create a reaction of poverty and distress amongst the working classes, are of most frequent occurrence. It is there that miscalculation occurs most readily, and it is also followed up by the severest consequences. It is in countries of saturated population, where the workmen who had

been engaged in the preparation of a neglected commodity, experience the most fearful distress, when dismissed in thousands by their employers, because unable, from the want of returns, to uphold their establishments. Had this taken place in a country where there was a sufficiency of food for all, the discarded labourers might still have met with their subsistence in return for some new service to those who were the holders of it. But there is no such resource, when the food is already engrossed by those more fortunate of their class, who have been engaged in the preparation of the more favoured commodities. It is thus that, in every country so situated, when there is any disproportion among the manufactured articles which are brought to market, there must fall a weight of suffering on certain classes of the industrious; even the makers of the articles which are in excess. But it is a mistake to imagine, that, by simply rectifying this disproportion, the suffering will be done away. It would only be more divided than before. There might be no increase of severe distress in any one quarter; but in exchange for this, there would be a straitness and certain feeling of penury amongst all the operatives in the land. Still there would be a glut; though not proceeding from excess in certain *manufactured* articles, with a corresponding deficiency in others. After the adjustment of the best relative proportion had been established between them, there would remain a glut of these commodities upon the whole; and that proceeding from an anterior glut, not to be rectified by any skill in the transference or new

distribution of capital; even a glut of human beings, which nothing can prevent, but the reign of prudence and principle amongst families; and nothing can correct, but the famine, and disease, and war, which are so many chastisements inflicted by the hand of nature, on human guilt and human improvidence.

13. It is vain to say, that, in these circumstances, a transference of labour should be made from manufactures to agriculture. We have already seen, that there is not room for an indefinite employment of labourers in the one department more than in the other. The population who are now working on the land last entered, or on the land that is placed along the extreme margin of cultivation, only obtain from it a produce which feeds the agricultural labourers and their secondaries, and which remunerates the capitalists. An additional population, if it anticipate and exceed the natural progress of agriculture, as already explained, behoved to enter upon land of inferior quality to this; which land could only continue to be cultivated with loss to the capitalists, or by means of an under-fed or inferiorly-maintained population. It is thus, that there can be demonstrated to exist a limit all round to the employment of labourers. And for the right direction of philanthropy, for the purpose of giving effect to her devices and her doings, to save the wasteful or the pernicious expenditure of her powers, it is well that all the false lights should be extinguished, which may have heretofore bewildered her, and that she should be no longer misled by a delusive confidence in impotent or fruitless expedients.

14. There is nothing more fitted to inspire this delusive confidence, than the doctrine which we now endeavour to expose. It suggests the idea of an indefinite harbourage for the people, let them multiply and increase to whatever extent they may. It gives a virtue unlimited to credit and commerce, and the enterprise of merchants; and removes from contemplation that barrier to the extension of agriculture, which must ever prove a barrier, alike firm and impracticable to the extension of trade. It overlooks the obvious truth, that there may be too much production, just because there may be too many producers. It is this which may give rise to a general glut, at least of all but the first necessaries of life. It is but a poor evasion, that because there is a deficiency in these, the glut is not universal; so that if all sorts of products were included, the doctrine has still a foundation to rest upon. It needs but one qualification to meet this. *Generally*, and with one single exception, even that of food, there may be an excess of products; and *universally*, or inclusive of food and of all things else, there may be an excess of productive effort. We shall at length come to a limit, beyond which the expense incurred in the fabrication must exceed the expense of the thing fabricated. At, or rather beyond, the natural margin of cultivation, we see this truth in all its nakedness; stripped of those accompaniments which, in the shape of marketing, and money, and exchanging processes, but obscure the character of the proceeding, without essentially changing it. Then it becomes quite palpable; for then the food which has been consumed by

workmen, during the process of their labour, exceeds in quantity the food which they raise. There is no mere distribution which can avert this calamity; a calamity that, wherever it occurs, is felt throughout the whole community of labourers. And a scanty return for the labour bestowed on the production of the one commodity of food, is very generally associated with a glut of all other commodities. Commensurate to a smallness of produce in the department of agriculture, is there a smallness of price in the department of commerce and manufactures. When immediately, and without exchange, there is a scanty return for the last agricultural labour expended on our overwrought fields, then mediately, and with exchange, is there a like scanty return for all manufacturing labour, and that because of our overstocked markets. It is thus that starvation, or more severe distress, may be realized, from the want of first necessaries, in the midst of general abundance, both as to the second necessaries and luxuries of life. This, if there be not a virtuous and well-educated commonalty, is the ultimate state of every industrious nation; a state from which it can only be saved, not by the multiplication of its products, but by a wholesome and moral restraint on the multiplication of its people.

15. This, then, is the substantial refutation of the new doctrine—that there can be no glut, if capitalists, in their speculations, would but speculate soundly—or, that they cannot overload the market, if they would but select and offer the right commodities for sale. The reasoning in behalf of

this doctrine we hold to be wrong, even though we should admit the supposition whereon it rests—which is, that the object proposed, in every presentation of commodities for sale, is to obtain other commodities in exchange for them. Although this were true, still there is one sense in which, notwithstanding the nicest possible adjustment, in the way of proportioning the respective articles to the respective demand for them, there yet would be a glut. There may be an over-population of the country, and so a glut of men—who, with the best possible accommodation of their industry to the taste and the wants of those who hold the materials of human sustenance in their hands, may still find the products of their industry to be too abundant, and therefore too cheap for their obtaining an adequate maintenance in return for them. The escape from this conclusion is, that still the glut is resolvable into a mistake in point of proportion, food being in defect, and all other commodities in excess; and that so a rectification would be brought about, were a portion of the capital transferred from the preparation of the latter to that of the former—or, speaking generally, from manufactures to agriculture. But this goes on the presumption that food can be raised by turning capital to this object, just as indefinitely as houses, or ships, or steam engines, can be multiplied in the same way. The state of matters at the extreme margin of cultivation is not adverted to. It is forgotten why, in the present circumstances of the country, that is the margin; and why it cannot, without loss, be carried further onward or downward than it

actually has been. The ulterior land would not, in the present state of agricultural science, feed both the primary and secondary population who should be employed on it. At least, it would not do this, and also remunerate the capitalist for his outlay. Nay, there is the utmost hazard, or rather certainty, in such a state, of lighting upon soils so ungrateful, as to convert profit into loss, and so diminish the capital. It were well if this check to indefinite enlargement could be fully kept in view; for a recklessness to limits, and necessary laws on the part of the *savans* in political economy, might induce a corresponding recklessness on the policy of statesmen, and even on the general habits of society. There are certain recent doctrines in the science, which, beside being unfounded in themselves, have precisely this effect. In particular, the position that there is no limit whatever to the means of productive and profitable employment, is really tantamount to the position, that there is no necessary limit on the numbers of the species. If work can thus be augmented indefinitely, then might workmen be augmented indefinitely. It is under the influence of some such maxim as this, that a delusive confidence is encouraged, and relief for a straitened and over-burdened community is always sought for in the wrong quarter—in the enlargement of work, rather than the limitation of workmen—in the increase of produce, when nothing will effectually or permanently keep the country at ease, but a check on the increase of population.

16. We feel unwilling to protract an argument

already too much lengthened out; else, instead of viewing the outlay of capital for the sake of production in the form of a material, we might proceed to view it in the form of a monied investiture. Under this distinct aspect, the reasoning might be so managed as not only to demonstrate a fallacy in the conclusion of our adversaries, but to detect a fallacy in the assumption on which their argument rests. And a further advantage would be, that without adverting to the limit of agriculture at all, the possibility of a universal glut might be established, in whatever state or at whatever stage society might be,—whether bordering on the extremity of its resources, as in some countries of Europe; or in the rapid progression of infancy and youth, as in America. Let any country be imagined, whose monied capital for the year amounts to a hundred millions, which by one revolution is replaced with a profit of ten millions, to be expended by the capitalists in the shape of revenue. Matters might be conceived to go on easily and prosperously at this rate, with a fair wage to the workmen, and a fair profit to their employers. And yet even here, without supposing any glut of men, there might be produced a glut of commodities; and that simply, from an increased desire, beyond a certain limit, on the part of the wealthy to become wealthier still. Under the influence of this desire, consumers might, at one and the same time, be led to save, and capitalists to speculate. Landed proprietors, for example, might by dint of economy abridge their expenditure by twenty millions in the year; and, instead of laying it out

on those ulterior soils that would not repay, might lay it up in banks, and with the prospect of an interest for the sum deposited. This sum, on the other hand, lent out to capitalists, will increase their facilities of speculation, and extend the monied capital embarked in production, from one hundred to a hundred and twenty millions.* In this ratio then, will the monied cost of the country's products be increased; but what is the result when they are brought to market? Instead of being met by a proportional monied price, they will be met by a returning power, just as much reduced as the producing power has been increased. The twenty millions that have passed from one side to the other, will overturn, for one year at least, the balance between production and consumption; and that year there is an over-production or glut, to the annihilation of all profit, and the positive loss of thirty millions over and above—or even of forty millions, if the capitalists spend as much in the shape of revenue as before. At all events, the capital of a hundred and twenty millions, laid out on commodities, would be met by ninety millions only on the part of purchasers.

17. It cannot surely be said, in this instance, that still the producers had erred in working up

* Here it may be said, that the capitalists will still have to start anew with only a hundred millions, because the twenty millions which they have borrowed, only come in place of the twenty millions that were withdrawn from expenditure the year before, and by which sum their capital fell short of being replaced in the last revolution of the economic cycle. This is only saying, that the glut takes place a year earlier than we think necessary to insist upon for the purposes of our argument.

more of certain commodities than were wanted. Their error simply lay in over-production; and this was an error, from the consequences of which no imaginable shifting of the production to other commodities could have saved them. What new accommodation to the taste of their customers who had only ninety millions to spend, could have enabled them to dispose with a profit, the hundred and twenty millions' worth of goods which they had brought to market? The consumers did not want other commodities in lieu of those which were presented. They simply wanted to be richer than before; and that, not by possessing themselves in greater abundance than before of certain special commodities, but by possessing themselves of a greater general power than before to purchase all commodities. It is the oversight of this distinction, we think, which has led to this new doctrine on the subject of gluts. When a consumer refuses certain commodities, it is not always, as has been assumed, because he wants to purchase others in preference—but he wants to reserve entire the general power of purchasing. And when a merchant brings commodities to market, it is not generally in quest of other commodities to be given in return for them; so that were these other commodities in defect, then had a portion of the capital expended on the first been transferred to the second, the balance would have been restored; and neither set of commodities being either too cheap or too dear, there would have been a glut of neither. This is not the way of it. The proper object of the merchant is not to obtain, in return for

the articles wherein he deals, any one species of commodities more than another ; but it is to extend his general power of purchasing all commodities. It makes no valid evasion, that money is a commodity. This may complicate the question, but does not affect its essential character. The truth is, that the real metallic money for which a merchant has any use, does not amount to more than a small fraction of his capital, even of his monied capital ; all of which, though estimated in money, can be made, on the strength of written contracts, to describe its orbit, and be effective for all its purposes, with the aid no doubt of coin, but of coin amounting to an insignificant proportion of the whole. The great object of the monied capitalist, in fact, is to add to the *nominal* amount of his fortune. It is that, if expressed pecuniarily this year by twenty thousand pounds for example, it should be expressed pecuniarily next year by twenty-four thousand pounds. To advance his capital, *as estimated in money*, is the only way in which he can advance his interest as a merchant. The importance of this object to him is not affected by fluctuations in the currency, or by a change in the real value of money. It is possible that he may succeed in advancing his fortune, by the business of one year, from twenty to twenty-four thousand pounds ; and yet, from a decline in the value of money, he may not have increased thereby his command over the comforts and conveniences of life. Still it was as much his interest to have engaged in the business, as if money had not so fallen ; for else, his monied fortune would have remained stationary, and his

real wealth would have declined in the proportion of 24 to 20. Better than lose this ground, is it for him to have laboured as he did, even though he should only succeed in keeping himself even with what he was at the outset. So that the great aim of every trading capitalist is, to increase his fortune as estimated in money. Commodities are not his terminating object, save in the spending of his revenue, and when he purchases for the sake of consumption. In the outlay of his capital, and when he purchases for the sake of production, money is his terminating object. If he start at present with a certain sum expressed in pounds, shillings, and pence, the great end of his exertion or enterprise is, that after the current speculation is completed, he might start anew on another speculation, with a larger sum, expressed as before in pounds, shillings, and pence; whether these have meanwhile increased or decreased in their value. Had this consideration been kept in view, we feel persuaded, that the doctrine of the impossibility of a universal glut would never have been framed.

18. There is nothing in the operations of credit to affect, but rather to confirm this reasoning. Generally speaking, when men trade upon credit, the only difference which it makes is, that they trade not with their own capital, but with that of other people; and there is nought surely in this, which should lead us to modify any of our conclusions on the subject of capital. Very often too, when trading upon credit, it is not strictly with the capital of others; and yet it may be a credit which has a substantial basis to rest upon. A

landed proprietor may bind himself to a future payment, in a written deed or instrument which he makes over to a trader; and in this way, a species of wealth, that is not fitted in itself to perform the functions of moneyed capital, is made available for this end. The truth is, that his written engagements, just like the notes issued by a bank whose credit is unexceptionable, because grounded on the immense landed wealth of its proprietors, have in them all the virtue of money. It is curious to trace the effect of such an operation. We can imagine an additional ten millions created in this way; and that at a time when the trade of the country was moving evenly and surely, with the annual outlay of capital to the extent of a hundred millions, and the return of a hundred and ten. If the additional ten millions that we now suppose, are created for the purposes of speculation, this has just the effect of advancing the cost of all the means and materials of manufacture; and so, causing an outlay of a hundred and ten with the old return of a hundred and ten, profit would be annihilated. If the additional ten millions be created for the purposes of extravagance, this has just the effect of advancing the price of all the finished articles in trade and manufactures; and so, causing a return of a hundred and twenty to the old outlay of a hundred, profit would be advanced from ten to twenty millions. In either way there would be effected, not the reduction of wealth, but the rotation of it. Should landed proprietors overspeculate to the extent of ten millions, to that extent do they mortgage their estates; and their creditors may be

traced to the holders of the means and materials in manufacture, who, by a commensurate rise in the price of these, have become as much richer as the speculatists have become poorer. Or, should landed proprietors overspend to the extent of ten millions, to that extent also do they mortgage their estates; and their creditors may be traced to the holders of all sorts of finished articles for sale, who, by a commensurate rise in the price of these, have become as much richer as the spendthrifts have become poorer. In the latter case, the error lies in turning to revenue that which should have been suffered to remain unalienated and undisturbed in the bosom of their property. In the former case, the error (and in spite of all the demand which there is by economists for capital to the uttermost, and production to the uttermost, the one is just as great an error as the other) lies in turning to capital that which should have been suffered to remain alike undisturbed and unalienated.

19. However interesting to pursue credit into all its issues and final consequences, we must not detain ourselves among the varieties and numerous modifications of which it is susceptible. We shall only instance the case when credit is entirely fictitious, but in virtue of a delusive confidence obtains currency to its notes or instruments for a time—as to the bills which are drawn and accepted by men of no capital, and the issue of engagements by a bank beyond its power of liquidation, should they have been turned to the prosecution of rash and ruinous undertakings. These, while their credit lasts, have the same power of effecting exchanges

as money itself has; and one can imagine, that in this way there may be sent afloat into the world of enterprise an additional sum of ten millions, while the whole pecuniary returns for the outlay of money-eyed capital were the same as before. There behoved, in consequence, to be a diminution of profit to the extent of ten millions. Amid the general losses which ensue by this overtrading, the adventurers, it is possible, may come in for a fractional share of the returns along with the previous traders amongst whom they have thrust themselves. But in as far as fictitious credit in the hands of some has thus made good its encroachments, it will be found to have been by the shifting of a solid capital that was before in the hand of others, now elbowed out by the more fortunate gamblers who have succeeded them. One melancholy effect often is, that labourers, thrown adrift and defrauded of their wages, have to live many days in penury. But for this excessive and unwarrantable speculation, they may have continued in their wonted fulness; so that, in this instance too, capital may be said to have been forced, though by anticipation, out of that which should have been left to its proper destination; and which, instead of being speculated with by merchants in the shape of capital, ought to have been spent by workmen in the shape of revenue.

20. At all events, the phenomena of credit, though we can afford to dwell upon them no longer, lend the most ample and satisfactory confirmation to our views on the subject of capital. In a season of great commercial distress, occasioned by many

failures, we often hear the calamity ascribed to so many people trading upon credit, instead of trading with capitals of their own. But this very circumstance proves, that capital cannot be carried beyond a certain limit in any country. Grant that the sum embarked this year on mercantile transactions, was raised by credit from a hundred to a hundred and ten millions, there need have been no failure, had the return for this sum, in the price of the goods prepared and brought by it to market, been a hundred and ten millions, with a sufficient profit beside to all who were engaged. But if, instead of this, the return is but a hundred and ten millions without any profit, then, on the supposition that capitalists have lived as usual, there must be failures to the amount of ten millions. It is not, however, the mere circumstance of these commodities being manufactured partly by capital and partly by credit, that has produced this result. It is simply the excess of commodities over the effective demand for them ; an excess that would have been the same although wrought up altogether on capital, instead of partly on capital and partly on credit. If, after that a hundred millions were embarked on the yearly business of the country, there was no room for adventurers trading in addition on a credit of ten millions, there would have been just as little room for them trading to this amount with capitals of their own. The same loss would have ensued, with this only difference, that capitalists to the amount of ten millions would have lost their own, instead of adventurers losing the same sum to other people. In the one case, the rash adven-

turers and they who trusted them, would have received their chastisement. In the other case, the excess of capital would have been lopped off. Whether it be an excess of production from rash adventure or redundant capital, the result is altogether similar. And thus it is, that just as population, when pressing on the food of a country, limited in its power of subsisting labourers, receives a check by poverty and disease; so capital, when pressing on the business of a country, limited in its power of returning the outlays with a profit, receives as effectual a check by the losses of real, and the bankruptcies of fictitious capitalists.

21. In conclusion, we would only observe, though at the hazard of some reiteration, that the number of human beings in a country, is very nearly on a level with the amount of human subsistence, and tends to go beyond it. Labour is the return given by the general population, to those who uphold them in the necessaries of life; and the products of this labour, may be either turned by their owners into self-consumption, or laid up by them for the purpose of future production. But just as labourers cannot be multiplied beyond the possibility of a wage to sustain them, so neither will the products of antecedent labour be multiplied and employed as capital, beyond the limit at which profits are diminished, so as to be on a level with the least possible maintenance of the capitalists. When a country is improved to the uttermost, and is, therefore, pressing on its ultimate resources, the necessaries of life have become stationary in their amount; and then nothing can raise wages but a diminished

population, and nothing can raise profit but a diminished capital. An increase in the necessaries of life, would afford room for the enlargement of both. So long as there is fresh land to be entered upon, there is scope for the investiture of more agricultural capital; and in the larger demand of an increasing population for second necessaries, as well as the larger demand of the new, and now wealthier proprietors for luxuries, there is scope for the investiture of more manufacturing capital also. While this is in progress, profit is upheld from sinking so rapidly as it would; and so the interest of money, which is proportional to profit, is higher in America, than in the old, and, at the same time, well-governed countries of Europe. But though, for a long period, agriculture may thus draw capital after it, it follows not that capital can, beyond a certain limit, force agriculture. In proportion as that limit is approached, profit falls; and capital, ever tending to an overflow, feels itself beset within the confines of a field too narrow for the advantageous occupation of it. The days have been, when the great prescription of political empiricism, for the distresses of a weak or wretched country, was an increase of population; but this has now gone by. The next remedy, at one time imbodied in the acts of government, and still proceeded on in the schemes of provincial or parish philanthropy, was the increase of employment; but this too, in ways innumerable, has proved itself to be a resource that is not indefinite. There is still an unbroken faith in the increase of capital, as a specific for the distempers of a land that labours, and is oppressed

under the multitude of its suffering families. But this device too, is impotent like the rest; and we must look to some other quarter still, ere we can find the secret principle of a nation's secure and permanent well-being.*

* In the following extracts from Say's Political Economy, the reader will observe his assertion of the doctrine which we have attempted throughout this chapter to expose as erroneous:—

"Neither individuals, nor communities, can extend or fertilize their territory, beyond what the nature of things permits; but they have unlimited power of enlarging their capital, and, consequently, of setting at work a larger body of industry, and thus of multiplying their products; in other words, their wealth."—Book I. Chap. v.

"Moreover, it may be remarked, that the powers of man, resulting from the faculty of amassing capital, are absolutely indefinable; because, there is no assignable limit to the capital he may accumulate, with the aid of time, industry, and frugality."—Book I. Chap. xi.

In the following extract, he seems to overlook what the real distinction is, between an old and a new country, in respect of the slow accumulation of capital in the former, and its rapid accumulation in the latter; and, in overlooking this distinction, he of course must miss altogether the perception of any absolute limit, beyond which capital cannot be extended:—

"In point of fact, capital is of much more rapid accumulation in new countries, than in countries long civilized. It would seem as if the colonists, in abandoning their native country, leave behind them part of their vicious propensities; they certainly carry with them little of that fondness for show, that costs so dear in Europe, and brings so poor a return. No qualities, but those of utility, are in estimation in the country they are going to; and consumption is limited to objects of rational desire, which is sooner satisfied than artificial wants. The towns are few and small; the life of agriculturists, which they must necessarily adopt, is, of all others, the most economical; finally, their industry is proportionally more productive, and requires a smaller capital to work upon.

"The character of the colonial government usually accords with that of individuals; it is active in the execution of its duties, sparing of expense, and careful to avoid quarrels; thus there are few taxes, sometimes none at all; and, since the government takes little or nothing from the revenues of the subject, his ability to multiply his savings, and, consequently, to enlarge his productive capital, is very great. With very little capital to begin upon,

Note.

We might not have entered on the refutation of the paradox against which this chapter is directed, had it not been the paradox of an Economical System which has obtained an undue credit in recent times. Like many other questions, it can best be decided, as we stated in § 3, at the extreme margin of cultivation. The mischievous influence of this paradox we have endeavoured to expose and correct in § 14 and 15. We conclude this note by a reference to § 18 and what follows —as an example of the manner in which a general principle might be carried through a number of subordinate phenomena and cases; and, if true, be found to harmonize with them.

the annual produce of the colony very soon exceeds its consumption. Hence the astonishingly rapid progress in its wealth and population; for human labour becomes dear in proportion to the accumulation of capital; and it is a well-known maxim, that population always increases according to the demand."—Book I. Chap. xix.

It is pretty evident from this passage, that, in order to keep up as fast a rate of accumulation in an old as in a new country, all which Mr Say holds to be necessary, is, that the individuals, and government of the former, should equal those of the latter, in frugality and good conduct.

We conclude this list of extracts, with a passage which depones to the fact, of the speedy restoration of a spent, or diminished capital, to its original magnitude; but indicates the prevalent misconception which obtains, as to the principle or reason of the fact:—

"It would seem that there exists in the politic, to a stronger degree than even in the natural body, a principle of vitality and elasticity, which cannot be extinguished without the most violent pressure. One cannot look into the pages of history, without being struck with the rapidity with which this principle has operated. It has nowhere been more strikingly exemplified, than in the frequent vicissitudes that our own France has experienced since the commencement of the Revolution."—Book III. Chap. vi.—See Appendix E. on Profit.

CHAPTER VI.

On the Limits of a Country's Foreign Trade, and its supposed power to furnish a people with Employment and Maintenance.

I. *The case of a country whose population is limited by its agricultural produce.*

1. The next resource which dazzles the imagination of philanthropists and statesmen, is foreign trade. This is held to be a fountain-head of wealth and of employment; which, in the eyes of many, are altogether indefinite. Such is the virtue, indeed, associated with the very names of capital and commerce, that many wonder how, in a country where these have attained an unexampled magnitude, there should be any distress, and far more, aught like general distress among its families. One might understand how a people, confined within the limits of their own home trade, should be in a straitened condition. But open the world to them, and the conception is, that all straitness and limitation are necessarily put an end to. With access to all the markets of the globe, it is felt, as if every clime, and every nation, were made to contribute to our abundance; and that a horn, filled with treasure from the various regions of the earth, were thereby poured over the towns

and villages of our land. The imagination is greatly confirmed, when we see the largest towns of the empire, in special connexion with foreign countries, and, to all appearance, upheld by the demands and the payments of customers there. The very existence of these large and flourishing establishments, and the maintenance of their thousands, and tens of thousands, of industrious families, are ascribed to a foreign trade; the annihilation of which, would involve the annihilation, not merely of their work, but of their livelihood; and the extension of which, it is thought, would carry along with it a proportional extension of support for an unprovided, or a yet unborn population.

2. And this popular imagination receives great countenance from the representations and the views of our most distinguished economists. Home trade consists in the exchange of one set of home products for another. But over and above these, there might be commodities produced at home, for which there is no demand within the country; and for which, therefore, no equivalents can be obtained among ourselves. These Dr Smith terms the surplus produce of the nation, the exchange of which, for equivalents from abroad, gives rise to foreign trade. Now, he so represents it as to give the impression, that without these equivalents there would have been no surplus produce—that the former, in fact, have stimulated the production of the latter—and that, therefore, without a foreign trade, we should have wanted not merely the exportation of a surplus, but the very existence of one. He clearly accredits foreign trade with a

gain to the nation, equal to the value of this surplus, which, but for the excitement of what is given in return for it, would not, he intimates, have been called into being. Had there been nothing to import, there would, according to him, have been nothing to export; and this gives currency to the notion, that neither would our present exports, nor *aught else in place of them*, have been produced. At this rate the foreign trade is a superinducement on the home, which tells in the way of a distinct addition to the wealth and resources of the country. If a million of our people be employed in the manufacture of export commodities, there is a very general imagination, and certainly an imagination which the views of our distinguished economist do not serve to correct, but to confirm, that they are employed in a business which foreign trade has called into existence; and, as their employment is the vehicle of their support, that to this foreign trade we are indebted for the support of a large proportion of our families.

3. Let us now attend, for a moment, to the real character and effect of these interchanges in foreign trade. Let us put, for an example, the two countries of Britain and Portugal: the hardware of the one country being exported, and the wine of the other being imported; a million-worth of hardware, and a million-worth of wine. The manufacturers of hardware in Britain, become the creditors of Portugal to the extent of a million—and to the same extent do the wine-growers of Portugal become the creditors of Britain. And there is a set of debtors, as well as a set of creditors

in each of the countries; the Portuguese debtors being the receivers of the hardware, and the British debtors being the receivers of the wine. The exporters in each country look to the consumers of the other as their customers; yet, in fact, neither receive payment, by a direct pecuniary remittance, from those to whom they have sold their respective commodities. The matter is adjusted in this way; and the description applies generally to the interchanges of foreign trade. The importers of hardware into Portugal pay their debt, not to the exporters of the hardware in this country; but they pay it to the exporters of wine in Portugal, and receive in return for their payment an order on the importers of wine in Britain. This order they remit to the exporters of hardware in Britain, who, on presenting it to the importers of wine, there receive payment. Generally speaking then, the adjustment takes place by bills of exchange, which have the effect of making over the debtors in Portugal, not to their creditors in Britain, but to the creditors in Portugal; and the debtors in Britain, not to their creditors in Portugal, but to their creditors in Britain. The parties thus brought into relation, may be alike unknowing and unknown to each other; transacting, as they do, through the medium of the bill-broker, who alone comes into contact with both. Still, virtually and in effect, the export manufacturers of our hardware, receive their payment from the importers of our wine. They hold themselves to be labouring in the service, and to be maintained by the wealth, of customers abroad; but, in point of fact, they are la-

bouring in the service, and are maintained by the wealth, of customers at home.

4. It is practically felt by commercial men, and clearly demonstrated by economical writers, that the power of exporting with advantage, is limited or measured by the power of importing with advantage; and that, when the one stops, the other must stop also. The export trade ceases to be beneficial, on the moment that the returns which come back in the exchange between ourselves and all other countries cease to be disposable. The deficiency of imports from one foreign country may be made up by an excess of imports from another; and a circuitous adjustment is then made by round-about bills of exchange. But a general deficiency of imports will lay an arrest on a farther increase of exports. In other words, we are enabled to send British commodities abroad, just because there is a demand for foreign commodities at home. The manufacturer of export articles is just as much indebted for his maintenance to our inland consumers, as the manufacturer of articles for home consumption. The only difference is, that whereas the latter works up a commodity which is immediately purchased by home consumers, the former works up a commodity which goes to the purchase of that which is immediately purchased by them. In as far as the home consumer prefers hardware to wine, he gives a price for it to the manufacturer, who in this instance works for the supply of the home market. In as far as he prefers the wine to the hardware, he gives a price for it to the wine importer, who is enabled thereby

to meet the bills of the export manufacturer, who has been working for the supply of the foreign market. It is thus that the export manufacturer works, though not directly and ostensibly, yet virtually and really, in the service of the inland consumer. If not employed in the fabrication of that for which the inland consumer has demand, he is at least employed in the fabrication of that which goes in exchange for such things as the inland consumer has a value and demand for. He works up, not that which the consumers at home want, but that which will purchase what the consumers at home want. He is the instrument of obtaining for them their gratification, although that gratification comes to their door in the shape of a foreign luxury. In effect, he labours for their enjoyment, and, in effect, by them he is paid.

5. We are now able to appreciate the doctrine, that foreign trade not only provides a vent for our surplus produce, but that foreign trade called it into being. The million-worth of hardware exported to Portugal, may be denominated surplus produce; seeing that there is no effective demand for it at home. But neither would there have been effective demand for it in Portugal, had Portugal not had the power to purchase it; and what gives this power to her million-worth of wine, is just, that for that quantity of wine there is an effective demand, and, of course, a power to purchase it in this country. But for the million-worth of maintenance in the hands of our inland consumers, and discharged by them through the medium of the wine-merchant on the export manufacturers of

hardware, to that extent would our imports have been lessened, and to that extent would our exports have been lessened also. Virtually, it is an antecedent ability on the part of inland consumers, which called this surplus produce into being. In the order of dependence, or in the order of cause and effect, the primary rank is due to the inland consumers, and the secondary or derivative, to the export manufacturers. And the plain reason is, that the manufacturers cannot do without the maintenance, but the consumers can do without the wine. Should their maintenance be destroyed by a permanent blight that would reduce the fertility of our fields, their manufacture would cease; but should their manufacture be destroyed by some barrier of interception that stopped both the exportation of hardware and the importation of wine, their maintenance would not, on that account, cease to be produced as liberally as before. The effect of the first catastrophe would be a permanent loss to the country, both of a certain population, and of the fruits of their industry. The whole effect of the second would be, a change of one enjoyment for another to our inland consumers; and, not a loss of people, but merely a change in the direction of their industry. We deny not the temporary inconvenience of this transition from one employment to another; but, after the transition has been effected, we should behold the same spectacle of as great and industrious a population as well employed and as well maintained as before.

6. On this subject, the history of wealth has

given rise to an erroneous philosophy of wealth. We are aware that they are facts which form the materials of sound philosophy; yet a false philosophy may be constructed of facts misinterpreted and misapplied. And this we hold to have been strikingly exemplified in the case before us. It is quite true, that at the termination of the middle ages, it was mainly the presentation of luxuries from abroad, which impressed a new habit upon our landlords, and gave a new direction to their expenditure. It is quite true, that their insatiable appetite for personal enjoyment, when once excited, proved a far more powerful spur to the cultivation of their farms, than a mere desire to support or to extend the coarse and feudal hospitality of the olden times. The love of finery and of sensual indulgence, greatly more inclined them to make the most of their estates, and to draw forth of them the uttermost of their produce, than did the love of a crowded attendance upon their persons, or of a crowded assembly in their halls. It is thus that commerce was a moving force, which speeded their transition from one habit of expenditure to another; and that it was a transition which led to a far more strenuous agriculture than heretofore. There can be no doubt that the carpets, and the looking-glasses, and the wines of other lands, gave an impulse to husbandry all over Europe; and that historically, at that time of day, the produce of foreign parts had in it a force of allurement, which not only attracted to itself a pre-existent, but gave birth to a new produce in the various countries of Christendom. But now that the transition has been made,

and the modern habit of our landed proprietors has been fully established; are we to imagine, that the withdrawment of any one, or even of all foreign luxuries put together, would cause the agriculture to narrow itself within its ancient limits, or put so much as one field or furrow of land out of cultivation? Whatever the wine of Portugal may have done *then* in adding to cultivation, has it so much as a particle of influence *now* in keeping up that cultivation? Although port should, in all time coming, disappear from our markets; is there a landlord in Britain, who, on that account, would let down the cultivation of a single acre of his property? Would he forego the hundred a year that he wont to expend on this luxury, because the luxury was no longer to be had? Would he bid his tenants remit of their wonted activity, because he had now remitted so much of their wonted rental—having no use for it, in consequence of this stoppage which had taken place in one of the outgoings of his previous expenditure? Though debarred from one of its accustomed channels, would he not find, and that most readily, new channels of expenditure, through which to impress on industry some other direction, and to discharge the same maintenance on an equal number of people in some other employment? Would he refuse an income so large as before, because, in the absence of some luxury furnished by a single branch of foreign trade, or because, in the absence of all the luxuries which foreign trade had placed within his reach, he was now at a loss for objects on which to lavish as great an expenditure as before? And

besides, is there not a charm in the enlargement of income, apart from all thought of the enlargement of expenditure? Wealth, no doubt, is an abstraction, when separated from the comforts and enjoyments which it purchases. But abstraction as it is, does it not tell on human conduct with all the power of a living and substantial reality? When the offer is made of an advanced rent for land, must the proprietor calculate on the additional wine, and dress, and equipage it will afford, ere he becomes alive to the happiness of the offer, and is led to close with it? But do we stand in any need of this argument, in the exhaustless variety of nature's gratifications, and the infinitude of resources or openings for expenditure? Amid all the failures and fluctuations which take place, whether in home or foreign trade, will not the desire of a larger revenue, and with it of a larger command over the services of others, remain an indestructible principle in his bosom? Is any conceivable obstruction in the intercourse with other countries, so to change the nature of humanity in this country, that we should no longer behold the men of it in the same attitude as before, as keen in the feeling of their interests, as insatiable in their longings and aspirations, and each on the full stretch of endeavour for bettering his own condition and his own circumstances? Landlords would just be as eager to receive a rent, and tenants as busy in their callings to pay the rent, and appropriate the largest possible surplus to themselves. In other words, many a particular trade may be destroyed; but the great and primary aliment of all trade would not be destroyed.

There might be a shifting of human labour; but there would be no lessening in the amount of it. And, in the act of shifting, there might be partial and temporary distress; yet, conceding this, we should surely and speedily behold as much well-paid industry as before—and that yielded by the hands of as large a population.

7. We may thus perceive what the whole effect would be, were our trade with Portugal suspended, or even brought to permanent extinction. Our inland proprietors would lose their wine, and our export manufacturers would lose one of their markets. But though, on the one hand, the wine should be lost, the ability to purchase it is not therefore lost. It remains entire in the hand of its old possessors, and is ready to be discharged on the purchase of some other gratification. And, on the other hand, though the market should be lost, the maintenance of those who wont to prepare commodities for the market is not therefore lost. There is on the one side the spare maintenance, and on the other the unemployed population. We may be very sure that things will not continue in this state,—that, in the first place, the maintenance will not be suffered to lie waste; and, in the second place, that the population will not be suffered to lie unemployed. There will, to the proprietor, be the substitution of one enjoyment for another. There will, to the labourers, be the substitution of one employment for another. In as far as the revenue that wont to be expended on the wines of Portugal goes to the purchase of foreign articles, there is just the loss of one branch

of foreign trade replaced by the extension of other branches. In as far as this revenue goes to the purchase of home articles, there is just a diminution of the foreign trade, compensated by a proportional enlargement of the home trade. Ultimately, there is no one interest affected by the change, but the interest of the consumers, who are now obliged to put up with an article which they like not so well as the one they have been forced to abandon. The very fact of their preference for Portuguese wine when they could get it, is a proof that there has been a sacrifice of taste in passing from the old luxury to the new; and so, a descent of enjoyment. This difference of enjoyment to them, is really the whole amount of the calamity which such a change can inflict upon the nation. Every other interest is comprehended in the price paid by the consumer, and which goes full fraught with all its powers and its blessings into the new direction that has now been opened up for it. It comprises as large a maintenance to the workmen. It comprises as large a profit to capitalists. And if the former luxury was taxed, and so made the vehicle of a revenue to government; this, too, enters as a constituent into the price, and the same price may still be made to comprise as large a public revenue as before.

8. We see, then, that the *terminus ad quem* of foreign trade, is consumption at home. The maintenance of all those engaged in it—the wages of the labourers—the profits of the capitalist—the tax laid on foreign articles,—these emanate not from the trade, but from the antecedent ability of con-

sumers, who may be regarded as the real supports and fountain-heads of the trade. What is true of home, is true also of foreign trade. It should be accredited with no more than with the commodities which it brings to the door of our inland purchasers. This it does, but it does no more than this. There is mysticism in the assertion, that a stocking-maker does aught more for the nation than simply contribute stockings; and there is just as delusive a mysticism in the assertion, that the wine trade of Portugal confers any other benefit on the nation than simply the benefit of wine, or the West India trade than sugar and coffee, or the China trade than tea. We are aware of other and far more magnificent interests being associated therewith—as the sustenance of a great population; and along with it, power, and public revenue, and national greatness. It is imagined, that, by the excision of a given branch of foreign trade, there would be an excision from the land of the means and the maintenance of all who are engaged in it; whereas, there would simply be an exchange to the consumers of one article of enjoyment for another; and to the people, the exchange of one kind of employment for another, but with as ample means and maintenance as before. The East and the West Indies are regarded as the two hands of the empire; and the imagination is, that were our connexion with these destroyed, Britain would suffer as much as from the lopping off of two hands, or, in other words, would be shorn of its strength and its capacity for action, in virtue of this sore mutilation. It would positively be shorn of nothing but its

sugar and tea.* Were our intercourse with the East and the West conclusively broken up, we should lose the services, first of our tea-grower,

* I argue on the supposition of these being their only, as they form their main commodities. When, to vindicate the importance of foreign trade, the superior worth and usefulness of its import articles are insisted on, as of timber from Norway, or nitre from the East Indies, which are important in a national view, the reasoning proceeds on a principle to which we render all homage—its subserviency to the benefit of consumers at home, being the only principle, in fact, on which we concede any value whatever to foreign trade. But this is not the only, not even the chief principle, on which our mercantile economists would rate the importance of foreign trade. They look to the interest of the sellers, and not of the buyers; although, in the price paid by the buyers, every interest of the sellers is comprehended.

And when once the real worth of foreign trade is placed on its essential and only proper foundation, there is much that can truly, and without exaggeration, be alleged in its behalf. Even its very luxuries may fulfil, to a certain extent, the part of necessaries in disguise. The tea, and sugar, and wine, which come to us from abroad, supersede a very great consumption in the shape of milk, or malt liquor, or spirits, which, though not absolutely essential to subsistence, would still have been indulged in, and so have trenched on the amount of that home produce which now goes purely and nakedly to the purposes of food. Even the food itself is often imported from abroad in large quantities; but this forms a distinct case, and in our next chapter it will form the subject of a distinct consideration.

Nay, it may so happen, that, in virtue of its foreign trade, the agriculture of our land may descend farther into the inferior soils than had otherwise been possible. If any of the second necessaries of life can be obtained, through its imports, with less labour; or if any of our farm implements can, by the same means, be either had cheaper, or made more effective; these would obviously tell at the extreme limit of our agriculture, and have the effect of somewhat pushing it onward to land of greater sterility.

And in those cases where we could have had a home substitute for some foreign luxury, without trenching on the food of our population; yet, if the actual preference is for the foreign luxury, it is because we have the enjoyment we like best at a less price, or, which is tantamount to this, a greater amount of that enjoyment for the same price. But this, too, is altogether an interest wherewith the consumers, and not the producers, have to do. The producers will be equally well maintained by the cousumers, in any way that the latter may choose to employ

and then of our tea-sweetener—for so might these regions be denominated. It is thus that we would reduce the importance of foreign trade to its humbler, but juster dimensions; and then assert the independence of Britain thereupon. The noble flotillas which periodically leave our shores, and return laden with the spoils of every climate, form altogether an imposing spectacle; and by which commerce has had a most bewildering glare thrown over it. But this commerce is really not a super-inducement from abroad; it is the efflorescence of

them. But it is the wisdom, and for the benefit of consumers, that they should encourage, by their demand, the foreign, rather than the home trade; when, as the result of their so doing, they obtain either a better quality, or a greater quantity of enjoyment.

Still, with all these qualifications, had our estimate of foreign trade been reduced and rectified, and set on its proper basis, governments would have as little thought of going to war for the purpose of giving laws to commerce, as of going to war for the purpose of giving laws to taste. They would have felt the matters of trade to be as much beyond their province, as the matters of fashion; and as little legislated in order to secure for us a market in other lands, as in order to arrange the dishes and wines of our entertainments, or the dresses of our ball-rooms.

The following extract from Say, is pertinent to the subject of this note:—

"Although all products are necessary to the social existence of man, the necessity of food being, of all others, most urgent and unceasing, and of most frequent recurrence, objects of aliment are justly placed first in the catalogue of the means of human existence. They are not all, however, the produce of the national territorial surface; but are procurable by commerce, as well as by internal agriculture; and many countries contain a greater number of inhabitants than could subsist upon the produce of their land. Nay, the importation of another commodity may be equivalent to an importation of an article of food. The export of wines and brandies to the North of Europe, is almost equivalent to an export of bread; for wine and brandy, in great measure, supply the place of beer and spirits distilled from grain, and thus allow the grain, which would otherwise be employed in the preparation of beer or spirits, to be reserved for that of bread."

an inherent vigour and vitality at home. Foreign trade is not the creator of any economic interest; it is but the officiating minister of our enjoyments. Should we consent to forego these enjoyments, then, at the bidding of our will, the whole strength at present embarked in the service of procuring them, would be transferred to other services,—to the extension of home trade—to the enlargement of our national establishments—to the service of defence, or conquest, or scientific research, or Christian philanthropy. The only change would be a change of object and of end to consumers; and a change of employment, but not a lessening of their maintenance, to those who are now labouring in the various departments and stages of foreign trade for our gratification. It would greatly subserve the cause of peace and of enlightened policy, were this juster estimate on the subject of all trade, and more especially of foreign trade, adopted by statesmen. The great majority of wars, are mercantile wars, which never might have been, but for the illusion of those great names and imaginary interests that are associated with commerce. We feel persuaded, that the fearful conflicts of other days would not now be repeated, could the nation but clearly see that the only interest for which it was called upon to fight, was a somewhat more luxurious breakfast, or a richer dye to the vestments which covered them, or an easier access to certain wines, or a more liberal importation of shawls and silks, and figs and oranges. It was never the menaced loss of one or all of these which formed the jealousy or the provocative that led to

war. It was the apprehension of a far more serious disaster,—the loss of revenue to some large class of our merchants, of support to some large class of our industrious population. Had foreign trade been seen in its true character and effect, we cannot imagine that, for the preservation of a monopoly or a sugar island, so many a struggle would have been entered on. A sense of national honour may still have excited the spirit of discord among the kingdoms of the earth—but not a sense of national interest.

9. But it would appear as if no experience could unschool our politicians and patriots out of their obstinate imaginations upon this subject. In the loss of our American colonies did many a statesman anticipate the downfal of the British nation. And in spite of the utter vanity of this anticipation, do they cling with as fond tenacity to our remaining colonies as before, and would still brave in their defence the expenditure of countless millions. It is not seen how, with the unabated fertility of our own fields, and those resources, far beyond the reach of any distant influence, which lie within the circle of our own shores, we would be in possession of as ample means as before for calling forth and rewarding the services of all our population. Could this only be apprehended, statesmen would not be so tremblingly alive to the interests of any particular trade, nor would they think the prosperity of our island grounded on aught so precarious as the brittle foundation of commerce and of the seas. They would leave commerce to its own spontaneous courses; and instead of undertaking, with anxious

heart and uncertain hand, as their predecessors did before them, the guidance or guardianship of its concerns, they would sleep secure in the midst of all its fluctuations. But this never has been, nor is it yet, the policy of statesmen. The doctrine of its natural insignificance is not understood by them; and both in the sigh of Napoleon's heart for ships, and colonies, and commerce, and the splendid vision of Canning, who thought he had conjured up the resources of a new world, by which, through the conveyances of trade, to multiply without limit and without end the riches of our nation, do we recognise that subtle delusion which has misled the legislators of all ages.

10. The agriculture of China is represented as now pressing on its extreme limit, yet, over and above this, Dr Smith tells us how much richer that country would have been by the accession of foreign trade. The only effect, we imagine, of foreign trade to a country circumstanced as China is said to be, were the withdrawment of a population from the direct service of ministering to the enjoyment of their maintainers by the preparation of home articles, to the indirect service of working up export articles for the purchase of commodities in foreign lands. There would be an accession to the enjoyment of the inland consumers, seeing they preferred the product of the foreign, to that of the home manufacture. But to the people, there would only be the transference of so many hands from one employment to another, without any accession either to their numbers or to their maintenance. To whatever extent a foreign trade was

superinduced, to that extent the home trade would be diminished. And, in like manner, when a new market is opened up, the imagination is, that all the business created by it is a clear accession to the country. And hence the gratulations that we hear, both in and out of parliament, when the market of South America, or the free market of the East Indies, or any other ample and accessible field, is presented to us for the egress of British commodities. But the truth is, that an egress can only be sustained by means of an ingress; nor will exports continue to be carried out with advantage any longer than the imports which come back in return for them can be purchased at home. The only advantage of a new market is, that the wares which it offers may chance to be more agreeable to the taste and the fancy of certain of our inland consumers, than those of any other markets which previously lay open to them. In which case, there will be a transference of expenditure from old to new articles of demand—the formation of a new foreign trade, we admit, but at the expense either of the home trade, or of another foreign trade that had been formerly in existence. The extent of our foreign trade is, in fact, limited by the means, or by the extent, of human maintenance in the hands of our inland consumers. The opening of a new market can do no more for the general wealth of our country, than the setting up of a new stall can add to the wealth of customers at a fair. It may present new commodities more agreeable to the taste of purchasers, or even old commodities at a cheaper rate than before. Either of these is an

undoubted advantage to customers. But it cannot add to the amount of the purchase money; so that if the new stall be at all resorted to, it must be by a partial forsaking of the old ones. The same is true of the world at large, where each new country that is opened for commercial enterprise may add to the number and variety of our nation's markets, yet not add to the general amount of its marketing. There is thus a natural, and, for the time, an insuperable barrier in the way of the extension of foreign trade. It is necessarily limited by the wealth of the consumers at home. And hence the mockery of those splendid anticipations which dazzle the fond eye of speculators, when, either by political changes, or by the abolition of monopoly, a new country is laid open to their enterprises. The dream is speedily broken up; and in the spectacle of glutted markets, both at home and abroad, may we learn that there is a limit to the extension of foreign trade, which no country can overpass.*

11. The truth of the principles which we have laboured to expound, was put historically to the test, when, on the one hand, Bonaparte, in utter ignorance of them, thought he was levelling a death-blow at Britain, by the exclusion of our commodities from all the markets of the continent; and, on the other hand, our alarmists at home, in equal ignorance of them, trembled for the result. Neither of the parties understood wherein lay the secret of our country's strength and resources; that is, in the ability of our inland consumers to turn the manufacturers of our prohibited exports

* See Appendix, F.—On Free Trade.

into any other direction, and in that direction to support them equally well as before. The truth is, that the extinction of foreign trade in one quarter, was almost immediately followed up, either by the extension of it in another quarter, or by the extension of the home trade. The stoppage of all intercourse with France, if it should hinder the exportation of our British cloths, would equally hinder the importation of their French wines; and the price of these, paid by the inland consumers, as it supported the manufacturers engaged in the old line of commerce, would equally support them in some new line, most certain to be struck out, on the former being abandoned. Even had every outlet abroad been obstructed, then, instead of a transference from one foreign market to another, there would just be a universal reflux towards a home market, that would be extended in precise proportion, with every successive abridgment which took place in our external commerce. We never deny the consequent change that would thus take place on the enjoyment of consumers; but, along with that, we again repeat, that after this revolution in our affairs, there would survive as large a maintenance to our labourers; as large a profit to our capitalists; and the means, with perhaps some new modification of taxes, of as large a revenue to government as before. The great apprehension, indeed, connected with the non-intercourse acts of other countries, was, lest the public revenue should irreparably suffer from them; and an astonishment was felt, when, on comparing successive years and quarters of the national income, it was

found that there had been no diminution. It is in beautiful accordance with these views, that a lessening in the produce of the customs was generally followed up by an enlargement in the produce of the excise, marking the reaction of the foreign on the home expenditure; and verifying, what we might with all confidence have expected beforehand, the certainty of a full compensation, if not in respect of luxury or physical enjoyment, at least in respect of every substantial economic interest; or of all, in short, which either patriot or philanthropist needs to care for.

12. It is not our province minutely to explain the variations of what has been called, the rate of exchange between two countries, or the causes on which they are dependent. But it is a truth, theoretically understood by economists, and experimentally felt by practical men, that the mutual imports and exports which pass and repass, cannot exceed a certain disproportion; that they must so reciprocate as to be nearly of equal value, the one to the other; or, at least, that there is a certain difference or excess of the one over the other, which neither of them can pass. The possible amount of exports is limited by the possible amount of imports, and conversely; and this is distinctly and numerically indicated by the state of the exchange. If there be a certain point at which the import trade ceases to be profitable, that determines the point at which the export trade ceases to be profitable. When there is a deficiency of imports, this produces a state of the exchange unfavourable to the export merchant, and which

goes in deduction from his profit; so that should he enlarge his exports any farther, the profit might cease to be a remunerating one. In other words, his power to export is limited by the power to import; and this latter power is evidently limited by the ability to purchase on the part of our inland consumers. It is therefore in vain to talk of the indefinite demand for our commodities on the part of other nations. This will avail us nothing for the extension of our trade, unless it be followed by an indefinite power on the part of our inland consumers, to purchase the commodities which come back to us in return. It is conceivable, that there might be a demand in a foreign country, and but for the obstacle we now insist upon, effective demand too, for British exports; the preparation of which would require the industry of a million of people, over and above the numbers already subsisted by the agricultural produce of the island. And, could the agriculture be so enlarged as to afford this additional subsistence, there would be no difficulty in meeting this demand from abroad. For the larger imports necessary to meet the now larger exports, could then all be absorbed. Let the maintenance be stretched out to the support of an additional million of human beings, and the wealth of the holders of this maintenance is thereby stretched out to a capacity for purchasing, either the immediate products of their industry, or the equivalents given in exchange for these products. The additional maintenance given in return for the new imports, goes to the support of the people who labour in preparing the new or additional

exports. It is thus that, with every stretch in the agriculture of a country, there is room for a corresponding stretch in its foreign trade. But should the population of that country have access to no other agricultural produce than that which is raised within its own territory, then, with the difficulty or the impossibility of extending the agriculture, will there be found a like difficulty or impossibility of extending its foreign trade. It is by an exchange adverse to him that the export merchant is brought to the test and the feeling of this difficulty. It is when imports cannot find a sale, because there is not wealth in the country to purchase them, that foreign trade meets with obstructions to its increase. It is then that the tendency to an excess is counteracted by the heavy diminution which profit suffers, from an unfavourable exchange. The limit, in fact, of our agriculture, is also the limit of our commerce; and so again, do we find the margin of cultivation to be a place in the science of political economy, whence another of its important lessons may be drawn.

13. This subject admits of some weighty and important applications. First, there is a fortunate coincidence between the tendency to excess of Britain's export manufacturers, and the tendency of British gentlemen to reside and travel in foreign parts. It will be seen, on consideration, how the expenses of our landed gentlemen abroad give an impulse, because they give a real advantage to the business of our export manufacturers at home. They tell favourably for that business on the rate of exchange. Had the non-residents of

Britain spent their incomes at home, it must have been chiefly in the purchase of home, and but fractionally in the purchase of foreign commodities. Only a small proportion of their revenue would have been appropriated to the purchase of returns from abroad, and, with this limitation on the imports, there behoved to be a corresponding limitation on the exports also. But when, instead of this, they take up their residence, or are much personally in foreign countries, their whole, or at least the far greater part of their expenditure, must be given to foreign produce; and this, in as far as the effect on exchange is concerned, is precisely tantamount to a larger importation of produce into Britain. The export merchants of this country have the same benefit from the residence of British landlords abroad, that they would have had from the importation of all which they consume abroad. The growth of a taste for foreign travelling, or foreign sojourning, has the same favourable effect on their interest, as the growth of a taste for foreign articles of expense among the gentry who never go from home. It matters not whether the *British consumption* of foreign produce takes place within our country or out of it. In either case, the price is paid by Britons, and is equally set over and against the price paid by foreigners for our export articles. The sum paid by Britons for articles raised abroad, is, in truth, the great fund out of which those merchants and manufacturers are paid, who carry abroad the articles which are raised at home. If this sum be any how enlarged, then, proportionally

to it, will the amount or the profit of our export trade be enlarged. The only difference is, that our export manufacturers, instead of working in the service of British consumers at home, work in the service of British consumers, who have chosen to transport their persons and their expenditures abroad. In the one case they are paid by bills on our merchant importers. In the other case, they are paid by bills on the agents of our absentee proprietors; and an abundance of bills on either of these classes is alike favourable to the business of exportation. If British landlords, to the extent of a million of rental, have chosen to take up their residence in France, and a million worth of British goods be annually exported there, the adjustment can take place as effectually by bills, as if our landlords had staid at home, and there had been the importation of a million worth of French goods into Britain. The British exporters are paid by bills on the rent collectors of the British absentees. Or, the British landlords have their rents remitted to them by bills on the receivers of British exports in France. There may have been no agricultural produce exported from Britain for the payment of this rent. The full value of it may have been exported in British manufactures; in which case, both the capitalists and the workmen of this country are as effectually maintained by the ability of our non-resident landlords, as if these had been living on their own estates, and spending their revenues within the country. This non-residence may not have lessened the amount of British industry. It might only affect the direction of that

industry. Instead of working in the service of landlords at home, by preparing articles which partly would have been bought by them, and partly been exchanged for imports to be bought by them; there are so many of our population employed in the service of these same landlords abroad, by preparing articles to the full value of their rent, and making an entire exportation of them. The receivers of these articles in France pay the price of them to the British residents there, and thus these obtain their rents. The preparers of these articles can, by means of orders from the British absentees on their agents, or tenantry, draw from the rent which they owe; and thus these obtain their remuneration. In the whole of this process, there need not be the transportation of any food from Britain to France, even though they are the proprietors of Britain's food who are there spending their incomes. The whole of that food may go to the support of British industry notwithstanding; and, in spite of denounced and deprecated absenteeism, may there be a population in the midst of us, fully commensurate to the maintenance that we raise, and maintained too in as great fulness as if the great and wealthy of our land never strayed beyond its borders.

14. There is much that we cannot demonstrate at full length, which, nevertheless, we might venture, with all safety and confidence, to affirm. The superiority of our exports to our imports is connected with peculiar facilities, and tends also to cheapen both the travels and the residence of our countrymen in foreign parts. A gentleman of

England, in any foreign country, will find it possible to negotiate his orders on home, both with greater ease and economy, than one having the same territorial wealth in Poland. Wherever he goes, he meets with the debtors of his own nation, who would prefer a bill from him, for the settlement of their accounts, to the expense and hazard of a pecuniary remittance. It is thus that he may get a premium for his bill, when the traveller of another kingdom would need to offer such a premium, ere he could obtain the conversion of his order into money. The exports of England may be regarded as the instruments by which she can obtain accommodation and service for her sons in any quarter of the world whither she might send them. The deficiency of return imports to England, is made up by the demand and the wants of Englishmen on the spot. What they purchase there, comes in lieu of imports. And so long as their expenditure abroad does not exceed in value the superiority of our *manufactured exports* over our imports, we hold that the non-residence of proprietors may be carried to any extent, without the infliction of any *economic* evil upon the nation.

15. But when a country, instead of exporting manufactures, exports agricultural produce, the economical effect of absenteeism ought to be stated differently. The non-resident landlords of England have their rents sent after them; not in the produce of their estates, but in the workmanship of a people who remain at home, and are fed by that produce. But the absentees of Ireland are paid, not in the work of Irish labourers, but in the

food of labourers. The effect of their non-residence is to carry of, not the ultimate products of industry, but its maintenance—not the food transmuted into the handiwork of those who are sustained by it, but the food itself,—to the positive lessening therefore of the means by which a population are supported. Should the absentees of England be recalled, it might add nothing to the maintenance, but only affect the direction of labour. But should the absentees of Ireland be recalled, the maintenance of thousands, now sent off in annual shipments, would be retained within its territory. This is another resource in prospect and reserve for that interesting country, when, in the further development of moral causes, it shall have become the congenial home of its own proprietors. This single change in their habit, would as effectually augment the produce applicable to the subsistence of Irishmen, as a better cultivation would: another proof, that however overpeopled in reference to its present condition, the physical and economic capabilities of the land are adequate to the liberal subsistence of a much larger population.

16. But there is another application still more interesting. Connected with the facilities which belong to England, for the manufacture of valuable exports, she has not only the power, beyond other countries, of commanding personal services abroad to Englishmen individually, but she has also the same superiority of power, for commanding public and political services to the state nationally. Food, speaking generally, is far more bulky and uncarriageable than workmanship; and, when we come

to certain of the finer and lighter fabrics, we shall find, that within the limits of one vessel, a hundred-fold greater value may be comprised in the products of human industry, than in the articles which serve for the maintenance of human industry. It would require, for example, an enormously greater expense to transport into the heart of France, a given value of agricultural produce from Poland, than to find way into Austria for the same value of muslins, or of precious hardware from Britain. It is thus that we are enabled, by the mere conveyance of our manufactures, to obtain a claim or right of command, over the property and services of a country in some distant part of the world. Instead of taking back in imports the value that we have exported, we may transfer it by loan to the government of the country; we may agree to subsidize its sovereign, and make good our contract by granting him bills on the receivers of our exports there, who are his own subjects; we may, by the same expedient, command the maintenance of our own armies in foreign parts, or we may pay for the services of mercenary troops. It is thus that, in fact, we have intermeddled with all sorts of distant politics, and have the means of doing so influentially. Even though Russia had equal wealth with Britain, so that the whole products of the one nation, if brought to the same market, would fully exchange with the whole products of the other, yet the wealth of the former is not so transportable as that of the latter. Russia and Britain have both great ascendancy in Europe, but the forces by which they can assert it, are

put forth in a different way. The former country, though not so densely peopled, yet, in virtue of its prodigious extent, may be said to abound in men, and in the sustenance of men. She can collect an overwhelming host from her provinces; and either send along with her armies the materials of their maintenance, or find, by plunder, these materials in the countries through which they pass. It is thus that her ascendancy is made good by a ponderous locomotion; whereas that of Britain may be upheld in the midst of peaceful and civic pursuits, and without the departure of a single soldier from her shores. Instead of sending soldiers abroad, she can hire and employ them in foreign parts, by the labour of her artizans at home. With the products of that labour, she can purchase the aid of foreign troops, or the co-operation of foreign governments in her schemes. It is this which has given her a mastery in the negociations of European policy; and she has made ample use of the powerful and peculiar weapons that her carriageable exports have put into her hands; carriageable, both from her position in the waters of the sea, and from the nature of the exports themselves. It is interesting thus to connect the politics with the economics of Britain, and trace her influence in other lands, to the simple circumstance of her being able, by manufactures, to comprise much value in little room, of her dealing in such light and transportable wares. Dr Smith, and others, had long remarked the impulse which a foreign war gave to our exports. It is because our expenses abroad just serve the very purpose of importation

from abroad. Government pays our export merchants, by purchasing their bills on their foreign correspondents; and, in making over these bills to commissioners, or subsidized governments abroad, they put their schemes of warfare into action. The demand for these bills gives a mighty benefit and enlargement to the business of exportation; so that, connected with our great public expenditure on foreign objects, there is a glowing industry in our manufacturing districts and great commercial out-ports.

17. And here we feel tempted to remark on the egregious delusion of that most mercantile of all our politicians, who founded every calculation of Britain's strength and Britain's glory on the prosperity of her trade; and verified the maxim of ignorance being the mother of devotion, in the idolatry which he rendered to commerce, whilst all unintelligent and unknowing of its internal mechanism—we mean the late Mr Pitt. Year after year did he lull the British parliament into mischievous security, by the oft-repeated tale of the superiority of British exports. It never once occurred, that a foreign subsidy, or loan, would of itself create that superiority. If we contract for twenty millions to Austria, it is only by the difference between our exports and imports that the contract can be made good. Had there been no loan, there would have been no such excess to boast of; as the whole payment for what had been sent abroad, would then have been made to us in the return of commodities sent back again. But there were no such returns, just because the whole of this vaunted superiority

in our exports had been absorbed in our foreign expenses. The phenomenon of a perpetual superiority in our exports, is explained by the perpetual yearly expense of our foreign establishments, as at Gibraltar, and the Greek Islands, and South Africa, and New Holland, and the other colonial dependencies of Britain in various parts of the world. And the phenomenon of that prodigious superiority in our exports, which ministered such complacency and triumph to the mind of Mr Pitt, was just the enormous addition which he made to this expense by his foreign subsidies and wars. We cannot imagine a more complete specimen of inverted mental vision, than was given on these occasions—when the country was bidden to rejoice during the heavy additions that were making to the mortgage of the state; and to read, in the necessary effects of this expenditure on the balance of trade, the symptoms of our national prosperity and greatness.

18. And whatever it is that we want done in any foreign region, the exportation of British goods to that region, or to its vicinity, facilitates or furnishes a mean for the doing of it. This holds true, let the business be what it may that we wish to have executed—whether the business of war, or the business of Christian philanthropy. The very circumstances which have invested Britain with such effectiveness in the political contests of far distant territories, mark her out as pre-eminently qualified, among the nations, for the glorious contest with human infidelity and vice all the world over. We have only to look intelligently at the process, and it will disarm the vulgar complaint,

that by supporting missionaries abroad we send money out of the country, and so impoverish our own people. If I indulge in the use of foreign luxuries, when they are brought to the country they behove to be paid for; and they are paid by our exports. Suppose me to abandon this gratification altogether, and that I transfer the expense of it to the support of a missionary enterprise. To myself there is a change—the substitution of an exalted moral, in place of a physical enjoyment. To the country there is no change, at least no such economic change as ought to be deprecated. The people who prepared the exports, that wont to pay the foreign luxuries which I used at home, may still prepare the same amount of exports to pay the expenses of the missionary whom I support abroad. It is thus that the agents of our apostolical benevolence and zeal may depart in thousands from our shores, and be upheld by us in the whole cost of their expedition and their doings, and yet may we retain a population as great as the agriculture of the island can subsist, and keep them in the same comfort and well-paid industry as before. The peculiar advantages of Britain enable her to do this without the transportation of any food; and simply by the transportation of her manufactures, through the medium of which, she can, without sustaining any economic injury whatever, send remittances, to an inconceivable amount, for the support and equipment of her missionaries. Instead of impairing, it would, in certain directions, give an impulse and extension to our trade; while to ourselves, the contributors, there would be but

the exchange of a sensible for a spiritual gratification—the giving up, it may be, of foreign luxuries, for the higher luxury of foreign benevolence. We as effectually support our export manufacturers in the one way as in the other; and though still, the expense of her missionaries forms too insignificant a proportion of British wealth to be admitted into the reasonings of economic science, yet the time may come, when our nation shall exchange her glory in politics and war, for a nobler and more enduring glory, and be the prime instrument of that splendid prediction, that many shall run to and fro upon the earth, and knowledge shall be increased.

19. On the whole, then, it is obvious that foreign trade will always, or very nearly, maintain itself up to that point which is desirable in the given circumstances of a country; and this without the anxious or artificial fostering of any national policy. Foreign, like home trade, is only to be accredited with the service of furnishing to consumers its own articles of enjoyment; and not with the maintenance of those who are engaged in it. When two countries enter into mutual trade, the common idea is, that each stands indebted to its customers in the other, for the maintenance of its foreign-trade population, just as a shopkeeper is maintained by his customers; and the enjoyment which each has in the use of the other's commodities, is regarded but as a subordinate advantage, as being a thing more of individual gratification, than of national importance. Now the real state of the matter is, that each stands indebted to the other, only for the enjoyment which it has in the use of the other's commodities; but that,

save where there is a transportation of agricultural produce, each maintains its own foreign-trade, as effectually as it does its own home-trade population. This view would reduce the natural importance of foreign trade, and so reduce the alarm that is felt in the prospect of its fluctuations or its failures. The simple consideration, that they are the consumers at home who maintain the manufacturers of the articles sent abroad, should keep us easy under all the casualties to which foreign trade is liable. The threatened loss of their subsistence to hundreds of thousands of families might well make us fearful; b t the threatened loss of oranges, or dye-stuffs, or tobacco, or even of sugar, wine, rum, tea, tamarinds, nutmegs, mahogany, and coffee, ought not to make us fearful. We might feel annoyed by the loss, or rather the change, of our personal enjoyments. But there are many things which annoy that should not alarm; and when such magnificent objects as political greatness and national security, and the sustenance of many thousands of industrious workmen in the cities and manufacturing districts of our land, and the revenues of the state, and the consequent support of our establishments, whether civil or military—we may rest assured of a delusive imagination, when these come to be associated with that trade, which but supplies us with foreign luxuries, and does no more. The destruction of our intercourse with any foreign land, between which and ourselves a prosperous and satisfactory trade may now be going on, will but stop an outlet for our commodities, and an inlet for theirs; but will not destroy the maintenance which, through

a process already explained, now passes from the consumers of our imports to the manufacturers of our exports. It will influence the direction of our industry, but not the amount of it; and leave to the industrious as good a wage and as liberal a maintenance as before.

20. But like every other economic interest, by which it is vainly attempted to provide indefinitely for an indefinitely augmenting population, foreign trade, too, has its impassable limit, beyond which it cannot be carried. In most countries, it may be said to repose wholly on an agricultural basis; and in no country of any great extent, can it be made far to overlap the limits of the maintenance raised at home. The imports and the exports mutually limit and determine each other; and, generally speaking, whatever foreign trade a country can support, it is not in virtue of an originating force from without, but in virtue of an inherent ability that resides and has its origin within the territory. If export manufacturers do prosper in any country, it, in the vast majority of cases, is owing to the power of maintaining them in the hands of inland consumers. Wanting this, to uphold a foreign trade, there would behove to be a process of exportation, without a counterpart importation; a process which economists can demonstrate by reasoning, and which merchants feel in experience to be impracticable. And the simple reason why foreign trade generally stops at the point, when, if extended further, there would need a larger manufacturing population than the agricultural produce of the country can subsist, is, that agricultural pro-

duce is of such expensive transportation. But the further development of this peculiarity we postpone to our next chapter.

Note.

The views of this chapter were advocated by us so far back as 1808, in a work entitled "The Extent and Stability of National Resources," and which we intend to republish in our next volume; and, in our apprehension, they have been greatly strengthened by the innumerable historical confirmations of the last forty years. We have stated in § 2, that, on the subject of Foreign Trade, the popular imagination is at one with the theory of our most distinguished economists; but we are not without hope that the attentive reader will acquiesce in the rationale, as expounded in § 3 and 4, of our opinion which is altogether opposed to theirs. We are inclined to lay great stress on the explanations offered in § 6, first, of the sudden expansion which commerce gave to agriculture at the termination of the middle ages; and second, of the impossibility notwithstanding, that any abridgments or fluctuations of commerce now will ever, by a reverse process, contract the agriculture within the narrower limits of bygone generations. The loss of any branch of foreign trade, is but the loss, as we demonstrate in § 7, of the enjoyment which the article of that trade ministers to its consumers at home—and not of any other of those great national interests which

are conceived to be bound up in our external commerce. In § 8 and 9, it will be seen how much the Political Economy of statesmen influences their politics; and of what importance it were to the peace of the world, if the delusive system which has prevailed hitherto in regard to trade, were superseded by sounder and juster notions on the subject. The vanity of counting on the extension of wealth by the opening up of new markets will be seen in § 10; and in § 11, the equal vanity of attempting to abridge or seriously to injure the resources of any country, which subsists on its own agricultural produce, by the destruction or even annihilation of its foreign trade. The reader must not forget that the main reasoning of this chapter, as in § 12, is grounded on the supposition of the food raised in the country being equal to the consumption of its people. On the other hand, he will perceive from § 13, that the non-residence of landed proprietors may not have the effect of lessening the home resources for the maintenance of the general population—while, at the same time, it is wrong to apply this principle to the absenteeism of Ireland; and from this single circumstance, that the rents of its land-owners are remitted not in manufactures alone, but also in provisions.

CHAPTER VII.

On the Limits of a Country's Foreign Trade and its supposed power to furnish a people with Employment and Maintenance.

II. *The case of a country which imports agricultural produce.*

1. It must be at once obvious, how much more carriageable the products of manufacturing industry generally are, than the agricultural produce is, which forms the chief maintenance of that industry. This, of itself, causes a great saving; when instead of sending forth the food which maintains the workmen, or the raw materials which form the substratum of any manufacture, we can, in return for our imports, send the finished and wrought commodity itself. There can sometimes a hundred-fold greater value be compressed within the same space, in a finer article of manufacture, than would be occupied by the food which went to the subsistence of the labourers employed in it. Unless the food, then, be relatively in greater abundance, or the country labours under some peculiar disadvantage for manufactures, it is for its profit to send forth the workmanship of human hands, rather than the subsistence of workmen; seeing that one cargo of the former is often of

greater value than twenty of the latter. It is thus that the same value can be transported at less expense, or, which is tantamount to this, a greater value of commodities at the same expense can be landed in a foreign market, in the former shape, than in the latter; and can there command a greater return of commodities to be sent back as imports. The export merchant finds that he can bring goods cheaper to a foreign market in the one way than in the other; or, with the same cost to himself, can there dispose of articles which bring him larger equivalents; and the country also finds, that, in this way, it obtains a larger return in foreign articles of use or luxury, and so at the same expense can command a larger amount of enjoyments.

2. But more than this; there may be such facilities for manufacture, as to put a country in the condition of having to import its agricultural produce. It may so abound in the best materials; or it may possess such a quantity of coal, that great impellent of machinery; or it may be the seat of so many mechanical inventions, each, so long as it is undivulged, conferring a monopoly on the possessor of the secret; or it may be so distinguished by the industrious habits of its people; or, lastly, it may have such superiority over other nations in respect of geographical position, and also in respect to the extent of its sea-coast, and so its easy and convenient access to distant places; that, with the benefit of these various facilities, it may be enabled to work up many a goodly fabrication, and many a desirable commodity, far cheaper than can

be done in any other region on the face of the earth. It is thus that the products of its industry may become the objects of a very general demand throughout the world. In these circumstances, the export manufactures which are carried abroad, may soon be equal in value to the imports which are used at home. They will even tend to exceed this value; in which case, should there be any barrier, whether natural or artificial, against the importation of agricultural produce, the superiority of exports over imports will tell unfavourably on the state of exchanges for any further exportation, which will thus be limited by the difficulty of finding disposable returns.

3. Now this is the very state in which, on the non-existence, or the removal of such a barrier, agricultural produce will flow into a country from abroad; seeing that its importation, notwithstanding the heavy expense attending it, may, to a certain extent, be profitable, and therefore practicable. If, by its advantages for manufacturing, a country can work off commodities cheaper than its neighbours, it may be so much cheaper as to countervail the expense attendant on the importation of food. To meet the general demand for our better and cheaper manufactures, may require the services of a population over and above what our own agricultural produce can maintain. For the maintenance of this extra population an extra produce must be fetched from abroad, subject of course to the charges of its conveyance. But as there cannot be two prices for an article of the same quality, the home and the foreign grain, if equally good,

will be disposed of in the market upon equal terms. The same necessity which caused the importation, must have raised the nominal value of our own agricultural produce. The necessaries of life will have become dearer than they would have been in other circumstances; but connected, as this is, with an additional demand for workmen, labourers will not on that account let down their standard of enjoyment; and so manufacturers will have to lift up the money-price of labour. It is thus that the peculiar advantages of a country for export manufactures, are met by a counteractive disadvantage, which will at length limit the amount of exportation. But so long as the cheapness of our manufactured goods, arising from the greater productiveness of British labour, compensates, or more than compensates for their dearness, arising from the more expensive maintenance of British labourers; the extra demand for our commodities will be upheld or extended; and along with it the importation of food from distant lands. A population will be formed in our territory over and above what the territory itself can maintain. For the sake of distinction, we shall estimate the *natural population* of our island by the number of human beings within it, actually subsisted on the produce of its soil; and whatever the excess of our whole population beyond this may be, we should term the *excrescent*, or the superinduced population.

4. Those export manufactures then, the labourers in which belong to the natural population, are exchanged for foreign manufactures or foreign lux-

aries.* Those export manufactures, which are wrought up by the excrescent population, are exchanged for the agricultural produce of foreign countries; on which countries, then, we so far depend for the first necessaries of life, the means and the materials of human subsistence.

5. This excrescent population will not accumulate in a country beyond a certain limit. In the first place, along with every extension of it there must be an increased importation of food, which will therefore have to be fetched from greater, or more impracticable distances than before. The sea-coasts, or river-sides of an exporting country, will only supply a given demand for corn;† and should the demand exceed this, the additional supplies must be drawn from the interior, and the heavy expense of land-carriage added to the expenses of navigation. It is thus that, with every accession to our excrescent population, there must be an accession to the price of grain, and so to the money-price of labour—a process which must stop, whenever the disadvantage to which a manufacturer is liable in the high wages of his workmen, exceeds the advantage which he has in the facilities of his British situation; for at that point will he begin to be undersold, and so shut out from any further enlargement of his business by the compe-

* Foreign manufactures are not always foreign luxuries.—See Note, Chap. vi. Sect. 8.

† See Jacob's Report to the House of Lords on the Corn Trade. A land-carriage of twenty-four miles adds the expense of 13½ per cent. to the original price of the grain; from which it may be seen how soon, by having to fetch it from greater distances, the process of deriving supplies from abroad behoved to be terminated.

tition of foreigners. But secondly, with every addition to the excrescent population, there must be an enlarged exportation of British goods, which will become cheaper in foreign markets in proportion to their supply. These two causes act together in powerful co-operation; so that between the increasing dearness of their maintenance at home, and the increasing cheapness of their manufactures abroad, an arrest must at length be laid on the increase of an excrescent population. Add to this the constant approaches to equalization, between different countries in industry and the arts of life. Britain cannot for ever perpetuate the monopoly which is grounded on the secrets of her superior skill, or on the superior habits of her population. Other countries must at length come nearer to us, both in respect of their machinery and of their men, so as to supply themselves, and likewise their neighbours, with many of our commodities cheaper than we can. It is because the workmanship of human hands is so much more transportable than the sustenance of human bodies, that the interchanges of commerce lie far more in manufactured goods than in agricultural produce. The bulkiness of food forms one of those forces in the economic machine, which tends to equalize the population of every land with the products of its own agriculture. It does not restrain disproportion and excess in all cases; but in every large state it will be found, that wherever an excess obtains, it forms but a very small fraction of the whole population.

6. It is all important, then, in our reasonings upon this subject, that we advert to the distinction

between the two sorts of foreign trade—that for which the returns are made in the manufactures or luxuries of foreign nations, and that for which the returns are made in agricultural produce. Each trade must have an agricultural basis to rest upon; for in every process of industry, the first and greatest necessity is that the workmen shall be fed. But it makes the utmost practical difference between these two, that the former rests on the basis of a home, and the latter on the basis of a foreign agriculture. In most cases, and more particularly where it is a nation of extensive territory, the whole of their foreign trade is of the first description —the home population engaged in it subsisting exclusively on home produce. When, over and above this, there is an excess of population that requires foreign produce for its subsistence, it will be found, in larger states more especially, that it forms but a small fractional part of the whole. In other words, generally speaking, the excrescent bears a very minute proportion to the natural population of a country; and almost nowhere does the commerce of a nation overlap, but by a very little way, the basis of its own agriculture.

7. By keeping this distinction in view, we shall better estimate the precise character and effect of that calamity, which either the suspension or the loss of foreign trade inflicts upon a nation. In as far as foreign trade rests on the basis of a home agriculture, the trade may be destroyed—yet, on that basis all the people employed in it will continue to be upholden. The export manufacturers will be discarded, no doubt, from their present

occupations; yet, supported as they were formerly by a maintenance in the hands of our inland consumers, by that maintenance they will be supported still, only in return for a new service. As we have often said already, there will ultimately be no loss to them, and but the loss of some enjoyment to their virtual maintainers; or rather, the loss of any difference, if there be a difference of superiority, which the old enjoyment had over the new one. It would greatly mitigate our fears of a calamity, and at least take away all sense of its national importance, could we but perceive of foreign trade, that its destruction involved in it no other suffering than this—that is, a certain disappointment to the taste or fancy of consumers; but leaving withal, the same amount of well-paid industry in the land, as sufficient a maintenance as before for as large a population. It is different when the foreign trade rests, either in whole or in part, on the basis of a foreign agriculture. There is no disruption between the people and their maintenance, by the extinction of the one trade—there is, by the extinction of the other. Let an end be put to the first, and our export workmen will still find footing, in some new capacity, on the soil that sustains them—where, in the midst of home resources, they will be sure of a harbour and a landing-place. If an end be put to the second, it will be tantamount to a sentence of decimation on the families of the land—a sentence which exile or famine will carry into effect. The destruction of foreign trade, in a country which subsists itself, may abridge the enjoyments of the community; but it will neither

abridge the population, nor the industry of the population, though it changes the direction and the products of that industry. The destruction of foreign trade in a country which has to import agricultural produce, would cancel from the land an integral part of its population and its industry. To depend in part on other countries for enjoyment, is but a slight matter, when compared with depending on other countries for our existence. The effect of a disruption, in the one case, is not to be compared, in point of vast and fearful importance, with the effect of a disruption in the other. Yet from want of a right discrimination, the two are blended and confounded into one. Politicians look with misplaced and exaggerated alarm to the loss of foreign trade in the general—to the loss of all or any foreign trade. The bugbear and the reality are both viewed with one common feeling; and an event which involves but the disappointment of families in respect of luxurious indulgence, is regarded with the same apprehension, as if it endangered the stability or very being of the nation.

8. When the excrescent bears a great proportion to the natural population, as it sometimes does in smaller states, and more especially in independent cities—then, when their commerce abandons them, their all, or nearly their all, abandons them. They sustain a mutilation by every abridgement of their foreign trade, seeing that the returns are chiefly made in the first necessaries of life; and that with the disappearance, therefore, of such a commerce, so much of their population and their industry must disappear along with it. In ordinary

cases, the discarded population are thrown back on the agricultural basis, which upheld them before, and which is broad enough, and solid enough, to uphold them still. But in this case, a population, dissevered from their maintenance, are thrown adrift on the wide world; and, with their dispersion, there is a corresponding decline of national strength and national greatness. There is all the difference in the world between that commerce, the annihilation of which would but involve the loss, or rather the change, of luxuries, and that commerce, the annihilation of which would involve the loss of the first necessaries of existence. In the latter circumstances of a country, we are not to wonder at the commercial jealousies which have actuated its governments. To be undersold by neighbours, were to them a death warrant, involving, as it does, their exclusion from those markets whence they fetch the very aliment of their being. This accounts well for the fragility and the precarious existence of all such states—of Tyre, and Carthage, and Venice, and the Hanseatic towns of Germany, which pass before us in splendid, but ephemeral succession, as we contemplate the history of past ages. When deserted by their trade, the very foundation on which they rested gave way under them; they having no such foundation in any territory of their own. They, in fact, became as helpless as any inland town of home shops or manufactures, when deserted by its country customers. This is enough to account for the speed and splendour of many a mushroom elevation—for the speed of many a helpless and irrecoverable fall

—for the decay of commerce in smaller states—and the utter destruction of its isolated cities. Hence the desolation of Tyre, and hence the departed glory from the north of Italy.

9. Now they are such histories as these, which have inspired many of our compatriots with the same feeling of insecurity for Britain. We have a splendid commerce, which somewhat overlaps the basis of our agriculture, and, of consequence, a certain amount of excrescent population; and that probably would be enlarged, in some degree, were the present restrictions on the corn trade wholly done away. Yet it is consolatory to understand, that, in our years of greatest scarcity, when all our ports were thrown open, and the utmost encouragement was given to the trade, the importation scarcely exceeded one-tenth of the annual importation of the island; and that the average importation of ordinary years would not serve our population for eleven days.* We should not imagine our present excrescent population to be so much as a thirtieth part of the whole; nor do we believe that, on the removal of all fetters from our trade, we should permanently superinduce upon the country an addition of one-tenth to that population who are subsisted by the produce of our own

* Colonel Torrens, in his able Essay on the External Corn Trade, urges this argument with great effect against the alarmists. He quotes the authority of Mr Jacob for the importation during the years of greatest scarcity being considerably less than it is stated in the text,—namely, that—if the one be correct in his calculation, and the other in his quotation—the importations of 1800 and 1801, taken together, did not amount to five weeks' consumption, or to little more than two weeks' consumption for each year.

agriculture. The circumstance of having any excrescent population at all, exposes us certainly to an inconvenience on the interruption of our commerce, which should not otherwise be felt. Yet, whatever that inconvenience might be, it is our confident persuasion that Britain would weather it. That a deficiency, by one-tenth of the usual supply in the first necessaries of life, would be seriously felt is very certain; and the price would be enhanced much beyond the proportion of this deficiency. Yet we believe that the country would experience a speedy, an almost elastic recovery from the evils of such a visitation. The very dearness of an article impels to a thousand shifts and expedients for economizing it. The people would, for a season, put up with fewer of the second necessaries; and this, of itself, would have the effect of at once extending the husbandry to poorer soils, and transferring so many of the secondary into the agricultural population. There behoved to be an increase of food, from the additional stretch thus given to the cultivation; and there might be a greater increase still, from the lessened consumption both of animal food and spirits, and from the stoppage of distilleries by an act of the legislature. With these compensations in our power, we have little to fear, even though the violent improbability, "*Britannos toto cœlo divisos*," were to be realized. We should remain as independent, as stable, and as great a nation notwithstanding. Let commercial failures and commercial fluctuations be what they may, they can never liken our history to that of the Venetian States, or the Hanseatic cities. The

maxim, "*Carthago est delenda,*" is not applicable to us; and, though lifted in menace by a whole continent would fall powerless upon our shores. Our commerce, after all, is mainly but the efflorescence of our agriculture; and though lopped off by the hand of violence, it would leave untouched the strength and stamina of the nation. Could we only brook the loss of our foreign luxuries, we might have a means and a maintenance at home for all our population, whom we could employ in the preparation of other luxuries; or with whom, enlisted in the service of patriotism, we might raise a wall of fire around our island, and brave the hostility of the world.

10. This distinction between the natural and the excrescent trade of Britain, when it comes to be understood, will hush the inquietude of our present alarmists. The one is based on a maintenance produced at home, the other on a maintenance imported from abroad. The export manufacturers belonging to the former are a disposable population, labouring in the service, and subsisted by the wealth, of inland consumers. The export manufacturers belonging to the latter, both labour in the service, and are subsisted by the wealth, of foreign customers. They are a disposable population too, but at the disposal of landlords at a distance, instead of landlords at home; of men who, in changing the direction of their expenditure, would desert them altogether, instead of men whose change of expenditure would but transfer them to a new service. That is altogether a false analogy, by which Britain is likened to those states of ephemeral glory, whose

greatness and power but lasted with their commerce. Our excrescent population and trade bear no such proportion to our natural, as theirs did. Should a disruption take place between ourselves and foreign countries, the excrescent, with us, would speedily be absorbed in the natural. When Venice was separated from her customers, the foundation on which she mainly rested gave way under her. Our foundation is our own territory. Though separated from our customers, we are not therefore separated from the maintenance of our population. There would be a change undoubtedly—a change of pursuits to the working, and of enjoyments to the wealthier classes of our community. But, with this exception, it would be as great and flourishing a community as before—as competent to all the purposes of defence and national independence; and, though shorn of her commerce and colonies, though bereft of these showy appendages, as available, and we think more so, for all the dearest objects of patriotism.

11. This view, we think, should serve to moderate our commercial ambition, and to quiet one of our great commercial jealousies. So long as Britain can pay cheaper for her imports, by the exportation of manufactured commodities, which are in effective demand abroad, she will never need to export agricultural produce; and so, to alienate from her shores the materials of human subsistence, wherewith to purchase foreign articles of any kind for her consumers at home. Her peculiar facilities for manufacture, will always secure for her this independence: and her only danger is, lest

her overpassing facilities shall make her independence a precarious one, by landing her in an excrescent population. In which case, the only effect of being undersold by her neighbours, is the abridgment of this excrescent population. What a mockery does this lay on the fears of our mercantile statesmen, and on the whole system of their policy. Their great dread is that of being undersold by foreigners; while yet the chief effect of the commercial superiority they are so anxious to preserve, is just to enlarge the sale of British exports beyond the possibility of their being paid for, either by the luxuries, or the other goods not agricultural, that come in return for them from other lands. In which case, there is a surplus of exports that must be paid for in agricultural produce. The population is thereby enlarged, beyond the power of the country to feed them from her own stores; or, which is the same thing, the trade is enlarged beyond the limits of her own agricultural basis. There are additions made by this to the weight or dimensions of the superstructure; but without addition either to the strength or amplitude of the foundation. The only effect is to foster an excrescence, which, if not mortal to us as to other commercial states, is just because, with the uttermost of our false and foolish ambition, we cannot overstretch the foreign trade so far as they did, beyond the limits of the home agriculture. By thus seeking to enlarge our pedestal, we make it greatly more tottering and precarious than before; for, like the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's image, it is composed of different materials, partly of clay and

partly of iron. The fabric bulges, as it were, into greater dimensions than before; but while its native and original foundation is of rock, the projecting parts are propped upon quicksand; for the sake of lodging a few additional inmates in which, we would lay the pain of a felt insecurity, if not an actual hazard, upon all the family. We rejoice in the luxuriance of a rank and unwholesome overgrowth; and, mistaking bulk for solidity, do we congratulate ourselves on the formation of an excrescence, which should rather be viewed as the blotch and distemper of our nation.

12. But more than this, we are not to imagine of the excrescent, that it either indicates or creates the same addition to the resources of the country as an equal number of the natural population. Suppose that the excrescent should amount to a thirtieth part of the whole, we would estimate the matter wrong, by conceiving that a thirtieth part had been added thereby to the whole previous wealth and ability of the nation. Let us compare ten thousand of the disposable class taken from the natural population, with ten thousand of an excrescent population. The former give the products of their industry, or, if engaged in export manufactures, exchange them for other products, by which they obtain their equivalent maintenance from proprietors at home. The latter give the products of their industry in exchange for a maintenance which they draw from proprietors abroad. For each ten thousand of the natural population, we can put to the account of the country's wealth the work of ten thousand and the maintenance of

ten thousand. For each ten thousand of the excrescent population, we can only put to that account the work of ten thousand, for their maintenance cometh from abroad, and becomes only ours by parting with the commodities which are given in exchange for it. In estimating the wealth that is indicated by the existence of the former, we must take into account both the produce of the land which maintains them, and of the labour which they give in return for their maintenance. In estimating the wealth that is indicated by the existence of the latter, we can only take the produce of the labour into account, without the produce of land. In the one case, we can reckon as the property of the nation, both the work and the ultimate equivalents of the work. In the other case, we can reckon but the work—for the ultimate equivalents are produced elsewhere, and form an integral part of the wealth of some other land. Dr Smith defines the wealth of a country to consist in the annual produce of its land and labour. An industrious member of the natural population, adds the produce of his labour to his country, and by means of it he fetches a counterpart produce from the land, which is also to be added to the country's wealth. An equally industrious member of the excrescent population, also adds the produce of his labour to his country's wealth—but the counterpart produce of land which he purchases therewith, must be reckoned to the wealth of another country. If the former do not create, he at least represents a double wealth in the country, beyond what the other does. So that a given ex-

crescent population betokens only half the wealth which an equal natural population does. If the excrescent population amount to a thirtieth of the whole, the wealth associated with their presence will amount to a sixtieth of the whole. The commerce that is pushed beyond the agricultural basis, to the extent of employing an excrescent ten thousand men, does not effectuate the same addition to a country's resources, as if the agricultural basis were itself extended by means of reclaimed land, or of an improved husbandry, so as to afford the additional subsistence of ten thousand men. In the one case, we have the additional work of ten thousand; but we must accredit the wealth of another country, and not our own, with their maintenance. In the other case, we have the additional maintenance of ten thousand; and, followed up as this must be, with an increase of population, we should soon have the additional work of ten thousand to the bargain.

13. But it will still more strikingly exhibit the insignificance, in a national point of view, of the excrescent, when compared with the natural population; if we attend to the relation in which they each stand to the revenue or service of the state. The excrescent population is made up exclusively of labourers and capitalists; and every tax, whether on their income or on the commodities they use, lessens their remuneration, so as to make a higher price necessary for the commodities prepared by them, in order to keep up that rate of wages and rate of profit, without which their manufacture or business could not possibly go on. But

in this way the price may rise so high as to cut them out of foreign markets altogether; the advantage of their British situation, in virtue of which they might have been enabled to undersell the traders of other countries, being so much countervailed by British taxation, as that they at length come to be undersold. It is thus that every such tax lessens the amount of our excrescent population; and, if carried to a certain extent, would cause it wholly to disappear from our borders. At the most, then, the excrescent population can only be made to yield a small fraction, and that a very precarious one, of their wealth to the exigencies of the public service. But let us compare with ten thousand of their number, any ten thousand of the natural disposable population. In the first place, as to those of them who are engaged in home manufactures, however high their wages may be raised by taxation, the inland proprietors, for whose enjoyment they labour, cannot escape from the consequent high prices of those commodities, in the preparation of which they are employed. In the second place, as to those of them who are engaged in export manufactures, their wages admit of being raised by taxation, till the inland consumers shall find that they can obtain the return articles from abroad, at a cheaper rate, by the exportation of agricultural produce. In either way, it will be found, that, compatibly with their existence and full extent, the natural population could bear to be much more highly taxed than the excrescent population could. But what is more, the landlords at home, who maintain ten thousand of

the natural population, can be reached by a direct tax ; so as not merely to transfer a certain fraction, but any fraction whatever, nay, even the whole of this natural population, to the service of government. If a landlord abroad still continue to purchase the manufactures of our excrescent population, though they come to him at a price enhanced by taxation a tenth part more than they would otherwise have cost him ; then, for every ten of our people whom he maintains in his own service, he may be regarded as maintaining also one in the service of the state. It is thus that for each ten thousand of our excrescent population, government may raise as much by taxation, as might enable it to command the services of a thousand men. But it could, by means of that higher taxation, which would abridge or annihilate the excrescent population altogether, command a much larger proportion of the services of our natural population ; and, by means of a direct tax upon landlords, could obtain a command over the services of the whole ten thousand. An excrescent population indicates but half the wealth of an equal portion of the natural population, whatever direction that wealth may be left to take. But the proportion is far more insignificant, when we compute the respective amounts of wealth from each, that might be made available to the public revenue, or to the general good and service of the nation.

14. Yet insignificant in point of national advantage, nay, hazardous in point of national security as we hold this excrescent population to be, we would not recommend a corn law to prevent the

formation of it.* But still less would we recommend any of the expedients of a mercantile policy, to foster it into being, or force it into greater magnitude than that at which it would naturally settle. More especially, in the circumstance of being undersold by our neighbours in any of the branches of commerce, we can read no symptom whatever of disaster to the country, but would rather hail it with satisfaction, as that which tends somewhat to limit or to abridge the excrescent population. This points to a policy more generous far than the narrow and heart-burning system of prohibitions, alike dissatisfying to the people abroad and the people at home. We would not, on the one hand, restrain the freest importation of food; but neither, on the other, would we restrain the freest exportation of British skill, whether in the shape of British artificers or British machines. All that we gain by the opposite proceeding, is the very questionable good of an excrescent population, who expose us to danger, and yield us no countervailing benefit in return for the room they stand upon. We have enough of natural superiority in our situation and products to secure us at all times, against any large or permanent exportation of food; or, in other words, to secure for us a population commensurate to our agriculture. The advantage of having a population beyond this, is far too problematical to be worthy of the contention and the keenness by which the rivalry of merchants is characterized. We can afford to participate freely with our neighbours, in all the advantages which belong to us as a manu

* See Appendix, G.—On Corn Laws.

facturing people; and, so far from regarding with any sentiment of jealousy the exportation of British capital or intelligence to other shores, we should conceive, that in this instance too, the magnanimous policy would be found the best for the true interest and safety of the nation.

15. On the whole, however, we believe, that in a perfectly free state of things, there might be a considerably larger importation than now of foreign grain into Britain, and of course a larger excrescent population. The causes however already specified, the increasing dearness of imported corn, the increasing cheapness in foreign markets of British commodities, and lastly, the constant tendency to equalization, in point of skill and other advantages between our own and other nations, would all conspire to limit the amount of this importation; and our hope is, that both the foreign and the excrescent might ultimately settle down into a very small and manageable fraction, first of the natural produce, and second of the natural population of our island. Still to this quarter we may look for a certain stretch or enlargement of external resources, whereby room and sustenance would be afforded for a greater number of families than we can now accommodate. Yet, after all, like every other augmentation in the outward means of support, it would but afford a temporary relief to the pressure under which we are at present labouring. As is usual with every increase, from whatever quarter, of the means of subsistence, it would be speedily followed up by a multiplication of our numbers, and so land us in a larger, but not

on that account, a better-conditioned community than before. They who are sanguine of this and other resources, as if a permanent sufficiency for all our families were to be the result of them, would do well to consider the vast enlargement that must have taken place within the last half century, in the produce of our home agriculture; and yet the actual straitness that is felt in spite of it. The phenomenon admits of an easy explanation, palpable as plainest arithmetic to the understandings of any, who will but compare the censuses of different periods, and reflect on the rapid increase of our British population. And on what principle can we expect, that an enlargement of resources from any other quarter, will not be followed up by as full a proportional increase of population as heretofore; and, of consequence, that we shall still find ourselves overhung by the same pressure, and in the midst of the very same difficulties as those which now encompass us. That the pressure may be somewhat lightened, for a moment, by the abolition of corn laws, and by several other abolitions and changes also, we cannot deny. But the same important remark is applicable to all of them. It is not by means of economic enlargements, but of moral principles and restraints, that the problem of our difficulties is at length to be fully and satisfactorily resolved. No possible enlargement from without will ever suffice for the increasing wants of a recklessly increasing population. We look for our coming deliverance in a moral change, and not in any, or in all, of those economic changes put together, which form the great panacea of so

many of our statesmen. Without the prudence, and the virtue, and the intelligence of our common people, we shall only have a bulkier, but withal as wretched and distempered a community as ever; and we repeat, that a thorough education, in both the common and Christian sense of the term, forms the only solid basis, on which either the political or economic well-being of the nation can be laid.

Note

Could we find acceptance for the principles of this chapter, it would dissipate the jealousies, and give an altogether new direction to the policy of statesmen—more especially in Britain, whose natural advantages for trade will ever secure for her, and without an effort, a commerce co-extensive with her agriculture. If we have succeeded in making intelligible the important distinction between a natural and an excrescent population, with the necessary limits which check the increase of the latter, it will appear how small and how questionable the benefit of such a superinducement is; or, in other words, how little desirable it is, after all, that ours should become a grain-importing country. But in § 8, it will be seen what it is that makes the distinction in this respect between the smaller and larger states—and in § 9, what the resources are for the security and independence of such a country as our own. In § 11, we have attempted to expose the misdirection which has taken place in the aims and objects of our mercan-

tile politicians—which however will be more fully understood by attending § 12 and § 13, to the insignificance of the excrescent, both as it regards individual wealth and the interests of the public revenue, when compared with an equal amount of the natural population. We shall be glad if we have made it palpable, § 14, 15—that on both sides men have been contending for an imaginary interest; and that therefore the system of free trade, while it will be found utterly fallacious in its promises of comfort and enlargement to our nation, is the best for removing a great and constant occasion of discordancy—whether between various classes in the state, or between its government and the general population.

CHAPTER VIII.

On the supposed Effect of Taxes in aggravating the condition of the Labouring Classes, with the converse Effect which the Remission of Taxes is conceived to have on their Relief, and the Enlargement of their Comforts.

I. *Effect of a tax on the net rent of land.*

1. There is not a more popular topic of declamation than the oppressiveness of taxes, and, more especially, their injurious effect on the condition of the working classes in society. The imagination is, that, when laid on the necessaries of life, they trench directly on the comfort and sufficiency of the labourer; and that, when laid on profit, or laid on commodities in general, they trench upon capital, and so upon that power which exists in the country for the remuneration of labour. It is thus that the distresses of the poor, and the straitened condition of the lower orders generally, stand associated in many a mind with the exactions of government. The effect of this opinion is, not only a rancorous politics on the part of the turbulent, but, even among calm philanthropic men, there is the pretty frequent persuasion, that each retrenchment in the expenditure of the state is so much clear gain to the common people; and that, by pressing an in-

definite economy upon our rulers, they are on the right way for an indefinite augmentation of personal comfort, not to particular classes only, but to society at large. It is therefore of importance to investigate the matter; for, if this abridgment of taxes be really not the specific, which is to charm away all want and wretchedness from our land, the attention of the patriot may, in the meanwhile, be diverted from the best expedient for the relief and amelioration of its families.

2. Now, there is one species of tax which, by the consent of all economists, stands exempted from the charge of infringing on the comfort of the working classes. We mean a tax on the net rent of land. The incidence of such a tax is altogether upon the landlord. He is made poorer by it; but no other individual or order of the community needs to be at all affected. A portion of the power which he had to purchase commodities, or to maintain labour, is doubtless taken out of his hands. But it is not annihilated. It is only transferred. After the imposition of the tax, the united expenditure of government and the landlords equals precisely the whole expenditure of the landlords previous to the tax. In the new state of things, there might be just as large a profit to capitalists as before, and just as large a maintenance to workmen as before. By every such tax, the power of government to uphold or reward industry is just as much enlarged as the power of the landlords is lessened. A certain part of the disposable population, employed in preparing luxuries for the proprietors of land, are placed by the operation of the tax at the

disposal of government. To them it needs be no other change than a change of masters—a change of employment. From the hands of their new employers, they may obtain as large and liberal a support as they did from their old ones. They may have the same support as before, but for a different service. They exchange the service of working up luxuries to private consumers, for the service of the state. They are withdrawn from the business, either of home or export manufactures, by which they minister to the enjoyment of landed proprietors, to the business of manufacturing government stores; or of fabricating the whole material of government service, such as ships, and fortifications, and barracks, and churches, and colleges, and prison-houses; or finally, to the direct business of war, or justice, or public instruction. Artisans may, in thousands, be transferred thereby into soldiers, or into artisans of another species. Master manufacturers may, in tens, or hundreds, be transferred thereby into officers, or judges, or clergymen. And the latter may be upheld in as great splendour, and the former in as great sufficiency as before. The wealth thus transferred into the coffers of government, can be discharged with as great liberality and effect on the various servants of government, as it formerly could when discharged by the landed proprietors themselves, through the countless channels of trade and manufacturing industry in the land. After this change, we may still behold the spectacle of as large a population, in every way as liberally upholden, with the only difference of being differently employed. There

is no effect produced on the reward of industry, but solely on the distribution of it. They who are paid by the tax may live as well as before. They who pay the tax are the only sufferers. They lose so many of their luxuries—or rather, they exchange them for the objects of the public expenditure; perhaps, through the medium of fleets and armies, for national independence; perhaps, through the medium of schools, and churches, and colleges of justice, for the protection of society from crime and violence, and for the increase of national virtue. Even to them, the tax-payers, it may not be a dead loss, but the substitution of one benefit for another—possibly the substitution of a greater for a lesser benefit.

3. Yet it may be observed, even of this least obnoxious mode of taxation, that it may be conducted in such a way as to lay an arrest, or even to impress a retrograde movement, on the wealth of the country, and essentially to injure it in all its economic interests. Under a government of capricious despotism, and unmeasured rapacity, even though it confined, which it would not, its exactions to the net rent, and left untouched all the profits of agricultural capital, as well as the capital itself—the cultivation of estates would languish or decay, from the want of consent and of active countenance on the part of the landlords. The proprietor would lose every inducement to patronize an improving tenantry, if he were sure that all the additional rent, which accrued to himself, was to be absorbed in taxes. Even if he were not sure—if in a state of insecurity whether

he was to get any of the additional rent that is yielded by land on its better cultivation, or of ignorance how much he would be permitted to share of it—there behoved to be, on his part, the feeling of a slackened interest, and so a far less careful and vigilant administration of the property. It is thus that the taxations of a government, which wanted steadfastness of principle and good faith, would relax and retard the agriculture of a country, even though these taxations were restricted to the share which accrued to the landlord in the produce of the soil. But the case is very different when it is a taxation of principle; justified by the urgencies of the occasion; levied alike upon all in like circumstances; not liable to fluctuate, as in Turkey, with the cupidity of the rulers, though liable to be extended with the necessities of the state, of which necessities the landlords themselves, through the organ of a free and representative government, are the effectual arbiters. In these circumstances, there is scarcely any centage of taxation, however great, that would discourage cultivation. Nay, we believe that, in many instances, it has led to the extension of husbandry; and that to the income tax of England, while it lasted, we have to ascribe the breaking up of many a lawn, and pushing forward agriculture to many outfields which had not been entered. The tax, in these cases, stimulated the cultivation. The landlords sought, by a more strenuous agriculture, to compensate for the deprivations which the tax laid on them. They drew upon the land for an additional produce, wherewith to meet the impositions to

which they were subjected; and though this cannot be done indefinitely, yet done it was in many instances, when from negligence or pleasure, an estate had not even the average cultivation bestowed upon it. We are aware that under an oppressive and arbitrary system, the tax would not operate in this way. In a country where the government could seize on individual property, no man would try to indemnify himself for one imposition, by means of an additional produce that might just bring on another imposition. The case is altogether different, when the tax, though severe, is equitable, that is, laid in like proportion over the whole country. Each proprietor, feeling that he is safe from any wanton or unlooked-for exaction in future, seeks from the capabilities of his soil, after all the reimbursement which it can afford, for the exactions that already lie upon him. In these circumstances, we really cannot specify to what extent the taxation on net rent may not be carried, because of the discouragement it would give to cultivation. For this purpose, the taxation would need to be not only excessive; but discretionary, partial, at the mercy of a wayward and unprincipled government, and altogether such as left no reasonable security for the enjoyment of any remainder by the landlord. The effect is totally dissimilar, when the landlords are not only the payers, but, through the predominance of their will in parliament, the establishers of the tax. And then, when the question is put, how far might this taxation on themselves be carried, without injury to the economic interests of the nation—it is ob-

vious, that it might be carried indefinitely near to that point, at which, having surrendered all their luxuries, they satisfied themselves for a season with the necessaries of life. This may be regarded as the extreme limit of the taxation on net rent; and by the actual distance of our landlords from this limit, by the degree in which they still can command and enjoy the luxuries of life, do we estimate the power which remains with them of adding to the revenue of the state. They could, on some high call of patriotism, transfer to the service of government, all the disposable population whom they employ. They could transform a million of manufacturers into soldiers. They could, if the emergency called for it, assemble round the standard of the nation's independence, a host many times greater than has yet been exemplified in British warfare; and, so far from touching on the *ne plus ultra* of our public resources, we, on the test of that command which still remains with our landlords over the luxuries of life, do confidently aver, that never was our nation in greater sufficiency for such sacrifices as might conduce to some high object of patriotism or the public weal.

4. We admit, that by a tax upon net rent, the power of the landlord to improve his estate is abridged; and yet, we hold, that the progress of this improvement does not, now-a-days, materially depend, either on his capital or on his enterprise. It is not at this time of day, that we have to complain of the want of capital for any operation, capable of yielding a return, or of replacing the outlay with a profit. We must recollect the opulence

of our tenantry, and their ability to enter on improving leases, in all parts of the country where improvement is hopeful. Or, if the proprietor behoves to be the improver, we must recollect the perfect facility wherewith he can now borrow to any extent on the security of his lands. When capital is at a loss all round for a profitable investiture of itself, and, labouring under the weight of its own plethoric magnitude, is ever and anon getting the relief which it needs in the bankruptcies attendant on all wild and precarious speculations—we may be very sure, that nothing is wanted, but the prospect of a safe, though moderate return, for drawing capital to agriculture. In other words, capital will never be wanting to agriculture, so long as agriculture is able to yield a profit to capital. The truth is, that capital has, in every business, a constant tendency to overshoot itself, by the application of it in larger quantities than the business can replace with a profit. And this is just as much the case in agriculture, as in any thing else. So that though every landlord were to spend to the uttermost of his power, whether on his own private gratifications, or in the support of government, we have nothing to fear for the progress of cultivation. There is perfect security that, on the one hand, a more productive agriculture will bring on a larger population; and that, on the other, an increasing population will so uphold the demand for food, as to encourage and speed onward the progress of agriculture. Meanwhile, the landlord, though sitting merely as a recipient, if he but give his consent and counten-

ance to the requisite administration, will reap the benefits of a process in which he takes no active share. His rents flow in upon him without exertion on his part. He will be glad to receive the whole—but should government interpose with its taxations, he will not reject the part which remains to him. The man of a thousand a-year will be glad of an additional hundred—but not more so, than a man of five hundred a-year is of an additional fifty. A tax then of fifty per cent. on the net income of landlords, would still leave them in possession of as zealous an interest as heretofore, in the improvement of their property. And should government but leave the profits of capital and the wages of labour untouched by their exactions, we are not able to say when it is that the share which government appropriates of the net rent becomes so large, as, by its adverse influence on the mind of the proprietor, to arrest or even to retard the progress of cultivation.*

5. Anterior then to all consideration of what might be yielded, if indeed any thing is yielded by profit and wages to the service of the state, there is at least one source of public revenue that might

* "Both ground rents, and the ordinary rent of land, are a species of revenue which the owner, in many cases, enjoys without any care or attention of his own. Though a part of this revenue should be taken from him in order to defray the expenses of the state, no discouragement will thereby be given to any sort of industry. The annual produce of the land and labour of the society, the real wealth and revenue of the great body of the people, might be the same after such a tax as before. Ground rents, and the ordinary rent of land, are therefore, perhaps, the species of revenue which can best bear to have a peculiar tax imposed upon them."—*Smith's Wealth of Nations* Book V. Chap. ii.

well stand exempted from the obloquy of indignant patriotism. A tax on the net rent of land needs not to trench on the income of capitalists; for the united expenditure of government and the landlords can afford them as large an income after the tax, as did the unbroken expenditure of the landlords before it.* It trenches not on the comfort of labourers; for all the power of maintenance that has been withdrawn from individual proprietors may still be discharged as liberally as ever from the coffers of the treasury. It changes only the direction of industry, and not the remuneration of it. As many of the disposable population as the produce of the tax can maintain, were employed in the manufacture of luxuries; or, while this produce was suffered to remain in the hands of the landlords, they laboured in the service of the landlords. When this produce was taken out of their hands, the maintenance of that population was transferred into the hands of government, and themselves were transferred to the service of government. There might be an abridgment of trade and manufactures by this process; for, instead of preparing tangible luxuries, the greater part of those whose employments shall have thus been shifted, might be engaged in what many economists call the unproductive service of naval or military defenders. This new distribution of our

* We employ the term income, rather than profit; because the expenditure from the hands of government being more directed to the support of what economists term unproductive labour, may be more in the shape of annual payments, and less in the shape of prices for commodities, than when that expenditure came from the hands of the landlords.

people would have the effect of lessening the trade of the nation; and to those who idolize trade, as if it possessed some mystic virtue in itself, over and above the power of ministering through the medium of its own articles to the enjoyment of customers, this might appear a great national evil. But, in truth, the gratification which consumers have in the use of its commodities, is the great, the only service which trade renders to the commonwealth. This, we admit, is destroyed by the tax. This is given away in exchange for whatever benefit the tax may be laid out in purchasing. Landlords have lost their luxuries. But there is no other loss. Every other benefit which has helped to associate in the minds of men the idea of prosperity, with the idea of trade, is fully and perfectly retained. Whatever power lay in the produce of the tax, when in the hands of its original owner, abides with it still, when in the hands of government. And with the single exception of landlords being shorn somewhat of their household, or stinted somewhat in their personal enjoyments, do we behold the spectacle of as large a population, in circumstances of as great comfort and sufficiency as before.

6. Having this view, we cannot sympathise with the despondency of those who represent our nation as in a state of extremity and exhaustion. And neither do we comprehend how it is, that taxation cannot be further extended, without bearing oppressively on the maintenance and industry of the people. We hold that there is a world of delusion in the invectives upon this subject, whether of de-

magogues out of parliament, or of the champions of reform and retrenchment within its walls. There is at least one direction, in which taxation may be carried further, without even the semblance, and certainly without the reality of any encroachment on the means of the general population. A territorial impost, any where short of the net land-rent of the kingdom, would but trench on the luxury of landlords, without at all trenching on the livelihood of the other classes. And to speak of our yet touching on the limit of our resources, or even being within sight of it—when the equipage, and the splendour, and the thousand effeminacies of luxurious expenditure, are so paraded before our eyes! We are aware, that the national debt falls with the weight of a mortgage on every estate in the island; a weight, too, that has of late become more oppressive, by the change which has taken place in the value of money. But, looking comprehensively at the matter, these mortgagees should be regarded in the light of landed proprietors. By the national debt, there has virtually been a division between them and the land-owners of the territory of the empire. Regarding, then, both the land and the stock-holders, as in fact proprietors of the soil, and as sharing between them the net rent which accrues from it; who will deny, that between these two classes, there is at this moment a greater fund for taxation and for the exigencies of the state, than there ever was in any former period of the British history? We have only to survey the distance at which, in habit and expenditure, they stand from the necessaries

of life; and looking on this as the intermediate ground, on which government might proceed indefinitely to appropriate for its own uses the price of their luxurious indulgences, we venture to affirm, that never was there a greater capability than now, for enlarging the number and allowances of the public functionaries, or for imparting efficiency and extent to all the departments of the public service. A levy of ten per cent. both upon land and fund-holders, would at this moment invest government, if not with a larger nominal revenue, at least with a real power of command over the services of a larger disposable population, than the same levy would have done at any former period in the history of our affairs. The funds for such an enlargement of the national revenue do exist in the country; and, without the injury of one economic interest, these funds may be drawn upon, with no encroachment whatever on the sufficiency of the common people, and no other loss to the classes above them, than the loss of a splendour and a luxury unknown to their forefathers.

7. By disentangling and keeping distinctly apart from each other, the sources out of which a public revenue might be drawn, we are enabled to perceive, in spite of the very prevalent notion to the contrary, how far we yet are from the extremity of our national resources. Even at the time, when an additional revenue seems hopeless, from any, or all the branches of trade put together; there might still be a fund, convertible by taxation to the purposes of government, and of greater amplitude than at any former period of our history. It

follows not, because wages are sinking in every department of industry, or profits are brought to that minimum condition, beneath which the capital of a nation must decay—it follows not, on these accounts, that government has arrived at the *ne plus ultra* of her possible income or possible expenditure. This would be true, if the only way in which a public revenue can be raised, is by extracting out of the existent trade of a country some fraction of its gains. Whereas, instead of this, let there be a tax on the net rent of land, and then a certain portion of the trade would of necessity be destroyed; when, instead of drawing, by an impost upon commodities, but a part of its value, the whole gross value of the destroyed trade may in fact be transferred to the coffers of the treasury. The capitalists and workmen disengaged in consequence, may be as liberally supported as before in the service of the nation; while the capitalists and workmen who remain may have still the same remuneration in the trade which survives. This, then, is a species of tax to which the common-place declamations of an overburdened commerce, or an overburdened and oppressed industry, are wholly inapplicable. Both may be overburdened by the weight of their own redundancy, when capital and population are alike in excess; but taxation, when confined to the proper revenue of landlords, is innocent of it all. And the proper test for the capability or the possible extent of this taxation, is just the power of land and fund-holders to maintain a disposable population, who prepare for them the superfluities of existence; and never, may we ven-

ture to affirm, was there a greater length and breadth of this capability than at the present moment. Never had government less excuse for foregoing any of the high objects of patriotism, because of inability fully and liberally to provide for them all. We repeat, that it is not the necessity of the lower, but the luxury of the higher classes, which at all stands in the way of our great public interests; and that every one of them might be most generously supported, with but an abridgment to the luxuries of the one class, and with no aggravation whatever to the necessities of the other. It is only because things are looked to with distorted vision, that the retrenchments which are now made at the altar of popularity, are hailed as so many acts of relief to the general population; when, if beheld in their true character, they would be regretted, by every sound patriot, as a sacrifice of the public good to the splendour and effeminacy of the upper orders in society.

8. The notion is very prevalent, both among economists and statesmen, that commerce and manufactures are the fountain-heads of the public revenue; and that if, by any chance, these are obstructed or dried up, the great source whence a government obtains its supplies is dried up along with them. The tax on a commodity forms a fraction of its price; so that when the commodity ceases to be produced or sold, when no price is given for it, the tax, in its present form, necessarily disappears: and it would therefore seem as if, with the cessation of the trade, government were to lose part of its income. It requires, we should think,

no great stretch of vision to perceive, that the manufacture is not the originator of a revenue to government, but only the occasion, or the channel, through which government reaches the purchaser of the manufactured commodity; and that, though the manufacture were destroyed, the wonted ability of the purchaser is not therefore destroyed. The truth is, that, by means of a direct impost, government could draw from him the whole price of the article in question, instead of a fraction of that price by means of a tax on the article. It is neither the sugar, nor the tea, nor the wine trade, which produces a revenue to government. These produce nothing but sugar, tea, and wine; and did the nation consent to the sacrifice of these luxuries, government might receive the whole price now given for them, instead of a proportional part in the shape of duty. What else, but an undue sense of the virtue which resides in trade and manufactures, could have led Dr Smith to assert,* that a commercial country, like ours, could afford no more than a hundredth part of its population for the business of war; else its commerce, deemed by him the very source of those finances by which war is supported, would go into languishment and decay—whereas, though the whole of that immense commerce, which is busied in providing the superfluities of life were this instant to be annihilated, it

* He at least states what the common estimate is, without qualifying or contradicting it. "Among the civilized nations of modern Europe, it is commonly computed, that not more than one hundredth part of the inhabitants of any country can be employed as soldiers, without ruin to the country which pays the expense of their service."—*Wealth of Nations*, Book V. Chap. I.

would still leave in the hands of the consumers the maintenance of the whole disposable population, out of whom a ten-fold greater military strength might be made to arise, than our illustrious economist dared to contemplate. And how else can we explain the egregious error of Mr Pitt, who confidently foretold the overthrow of France, because, in the ruin of her trade, he conceived that her means of defence and of warfare were utterly exterminated? The truth is, that it was the wreck of her commerce which created her armies. Her disposable population, disbanded from their former pacific employments, flocked in myriads to the standard of independence, and at length of agression and conquest over all her enemies. Their old employments failed them, but their maintenance did not fail them. It remained in the hands of those who wont to be their customers; and, when surrendered by them, at the call of patriotism, or the bidding of an energetic government, for the necessities of the state, it was made available for the support of the same population, now transferred from the business of trade to the business of war. This destruction of their trade, on which Pitt founded his calculations of their downfal, was the very thing which made them the scourge and the terror of all Europe. It transformed millions of artisans into soldiers; and in very proportion to their decay as a manufacturing, was their extension and their growth as a military nation. Their fancied weakness turned out to be their real and formidable strength; and in that mighty re-action, which took place on the breaking up of the old system of their

affairs, have the principles which we now try to expound received, from the finger of history, their most signal and conclusive demonstration.

9. We gather, from this argument, that there might be a misplaced antipathy to taxation. We could understand the sentiment, and would also share in it, should it be made to appear of any tax, that it dries up the springs of our economic prosperity, or trenches, in the slightest degree, on the comforts of the poor man and the labourer. But if, on unravelling the mechanism of human society, it becomes evident, that there is but the semblance of this effect without the reality, it ought to mitigate our indignation, and in certain cases, perhaps, to transfer our generous and patriotic sensibilities to the opposite side. A tax on the net rent of land is clearly of this description; abridging nothing, by its operation, but the luxuries of the wealthier classes; and appropriated, as its produce may be, to the extension of the best interests of the commonwealth. The popular representation of the matter is, that, in virtue of our enormous taxes, the minions of government are allowed to fatten on the spoils of the nation, to the further hardship and oppression of its starving multitudes. We believe the juster representation to be, that, in virtue of a sweeping and blindfold retrenchment, the affluent proprietor is enabled to live in greater splendour and delicacy; and that by a farther reduction on the hard-won earnings of those who are the public's most useful and laborious servants. The monarchy is shorn of its splendour; the great offices of the state are stripped of their graceful

and becoming dignity; the system of public instruction is stinted of its needful allowances; the requisite agency for the business of government is crippled in all its departments; our gallant warriors pine in sordid destitution; science, in the Gothic barbarity of our times, is unfostered and unrewarded; in a word, the glory and substantial interests of the nation are sacrificed,—and all with no other effect, than so to ease the landed and the funded aristocracy, that they may be more delicately regaled, or more magnificently attired and attended. The tax, we repeat, does not trench on the livelihood of the poor, but on the luxuries of the rich; and statesmen, misled by a false political economy, or looking only at the surface of things, have made surrender, to a very phantom, of the highest objects of patriotism.

10. We confess that, on this subject, we have no sympathy with what has been called the spirit of the age. The very worst effects are to be dreaded from it. Every thing now is made a question of finance; and science, with all which can grace or dignify a nation, is vulgarized and brought down to a common standard—the standard of the market and of the counting-house. It does look menacing, to take one example out of the thousand which may be specified, that it hinged on one solitary vote,* whether the trigonometrical survey of our island should be permitted to go on—a work which,

* It is but fair to say, however, that the majority of one for the continuance of the survey, was in the vote of a committee, which, though it had been adverse, would still have been subject to correction in the House of Commons.

like the doomsday-book of England, might after the lapse of a millennium still survive, as a great national index for the guidance of our most distant posterity. It makes one tremble for some fearful resurrection of the old Gothic spirit amongst us—when one thinks that we were within a hair-breadth of this noble enterprise being quashed. And this is the spirit of the age!—an age of unsparing retrenchment; a regime of hard and hunger-bitten economy, before whose remorseless pruning-hook, lie withering and dissevered from their stem, the noblest interests of the commonwealth; a vehement outrageous parsimony, which under the guise of patriotism, so reigns and ravens over the whole length and breadth of the land, and cares not though both religion and philosophy should expire, if but some wretched item of shred and of candle-end should be gained by the sacrifice; this, though now the ascendant policy of our nation, elevated into power by the decisions of the legislature, and blown into popularity by the hosannahs of the multitude, will be looked back upon by posterity as an inglorious feature of the worst and most inglorious period in the annals of Britain; the befitting policy for an age of little measures and little men.

11. We are aware of the sacrifices which are now being made at the shrine of popularity. A loud call for economy, in all the branches of the public service, has been met to the extent of a most hurtful reduction, both in the number of our national functionaries, and in their allowances; without, we venture to affirm, one particle of ad-

dition to the comforts of the general population. In as far as the taxation falls upon landlords, then, it but transfers the services of the people to other masters, without effecting necessarily a diminution of their wages; and the remission of such taxation will but commit them back again to their old employers, and without the increase of their wages. We therefore hold, that those politicians and philanthropists are altogether on a wrong track, who act as if this were the expedient by which aught like permanent relief is to be obtained for the working classes of society. Let capital continue to press on the business of the country as before, which it will do, so long as the appetency for wealth preponderates over a taste either for the luxuries which wealth can purchase, or the generosities which wealth enables us to exercise; and let population continue to press on the food of the country, which it also will do, so long as the love of animal enjoyment predominates over a taste for the comforts and decencies which even humble life might attain to; and nothing within the compass of human wisdom can be devised, by which to save either the distempers of our commerce or the destitution of our peasantry. Government will have the mortification to find, that, after having dismantled its various establishments, to the great damage of great national interests, it will have still the same encounter to maintain, (and that, too, in the midst of the weakness and helplessness to which itself has voluntarily descended,) with as wretched, as dissatisfied a population as before.

12. But we have only reasoned, hitherto, on the

effect, not of all taxation, but of a special taxation, even that on the net rent of land. But the great majority of our actual taxes appear to fall on profit and wages; and on the incidence and effect of these we reserve ourselves for the following chapter.

Note.

Ere the reader can be prepared for the doctrine of this chapter, he must attend to the qualification in § 3 by which it is limited. And he will all the sooner give his consent, if, agreeably to § 4, he advert to the readiness wherewith capital in a rightly governed society, springs up in other hands than those of the landlord. We trust that it may also displace his antipathy to taxation, as if it were the scourge of a country, when in fact, § 8, 9, and 10, it may be the instrument for giving its best direction to the expenditure of the country's wealth, for the best and highest interests of the nation.

CHAPTER IX.

On the supposed Effect of Taxes in aggravating the Condition of the Labouring Classes, with the converse Effect which the Remission of Taxes is conceived to have on their Relief, and the Enlargement of their Comforts.

II. *On the taxes which seem to affect profit and wages*

1. When a tax is laid upon net rent, the landed proprietor can claim no indemnification for it, from the other classes of society. There is not a sounder principle in political economy, than that it is not the rent of land which causes the high price of agricultural produce—but that the high price of agricultural produce, brought on by other influences, is the cause of rent. The landed proprietor cannot indemnify himself for the tax, by putting, at his own pleasure, a higher pecuniary value on the products of the soil. It is not the will of the landlord which determines their price. The price of corn fluctuates, like that of every other commodity, with the proportion which the quantity of it brought to market bears to the demand. If, on the one hand, the population choose to multiply, though with the surrender of a part of their wonted comforts; this, by adding to the number and competition of the buyers, will raise the price of corn,

without any will or exertion on the part of the landlords. Or if, on the other hand, it be the collective will of the population, to forego the pleasure of early marriages, for other and higher pleasures—this may so slacken the demand for corn, that its price, relative to labour, may become lower than before. It is not the landlord, who either raises the price of grain in the one case, or lets it down in the other. He is the mere recipient of a surplus, the amount of which is determined, by causes extrinsic to himself and independent of himself. He cannot augment this surplus at his pleasure, so as to indemnify himself for the share which government chooses to assume of it. They take from him the maintenance of a certain part of the disposable population; and, along with this, they take from him the services of that population. But this change does not affect, either the number of the disposable population, or their power of purchasing. These remain unaltered; and so the price of agricultural produce remains the same as before. Landlords, therefore, have no way of making their escape from the impositions of government; or, of shifting the burden from themselves to any other class of society. And, if it can be proved, that, in this respect, they stand distinguished both from capitalists and labourers; if these find relief from the taxes which are laid upon them, in the higher prices of what they sell, or in the higher wages of what they work; then, all taxes, however ostensibly laid, in the first instance, will be found, ultimately, to land on the proprietors of the soil.

2. Many are the instances in which it is quite palpable, that the first incidence, and the ultimate effect of a tax, lie on different persons. Perhaps the most frequent and familiar example of this is, when a tax on commodities falls at first upon the manufacturer or the dealer; but he indemnifies himself by raising the price, and so transfers the burden of it to the purchaser. He shifts the imposition away from himself to another; and the question is, whether there are not whole classes of men, who, though they do pay taxes ostensibly, do not, in fact, substantially and really, pay them at all. If a merchant, in particular, can escape from the tax laid on the commodity in which he deals, can he not equally escape from all attempts to reach him by taxation in some other way? If, by raising the price of his article, he can indemnify himself for a tax upon commodities, has he not the same resource against a tax upon profits, or a tax on any of the objects of his expenditure?* Certain enough it is, that a tax on profits cannot be carried to the annihilation of all profit, or a tax on the expenses of living to the annihilation of the livelihood of capitalists, else trade and manufactures would altogether cease. On the first blush of the matter, then, there do appear to be certain compensatory processes, by which we are sure that

* Mr T. Perronet Thomson, in commenting on the opinions of an economist, who distinguishes between certain taxes which do fall upon purchasers, and certain which do not, shrewdly, and, in my opinion, soundly observes,—"It would be curious to know how he convinces himself, that this is true, when the tax is demanded from the producer, under the title of a tax on his commodities, and would not have been true, if the same sum had been demanded from him, under the title of a tax on his profits."

some taxes are made up for to the capitalists; and which, perhaps, have enough of power and efficacy in them, to make up for all their taxes whatever. In like manner, it seems conceded, that no tax, either upon the person of the labourer or upon his maintenance, can trench so far upon his means, as to leave him without the power of supporting himself and family, in such a way as shall at least keep up the population of the land. In this department of society too, then, it would appear, that there is a compensatory process, by which the taxes that bear on the subsistence and comforts of the labourer, are either partially or entirely made up for; and must therefore be transferred to some other class who bear the burden of them. If it can be proved, that all taxes, affecting the status of the capitalists, are made up for to them by higher prices; and that all taxes, affecting the status of the labourers, are made up for to them by higher wages—this would seem to conduct us to the old doctrine of the French economists, though by a different process from theirs, that all taxes fall ultimately on the net rent of land. The common imagination is, that this is a doctrine which has been long exploded. The reasoning may be exploded, but yet the doctrine may be true notwithstanding, and may be established on the foundation of other reasoning

3. There is one argument connected with this doctrine, which has been occasionally touched upon by economical writers; and did we not hold ourselves in possession of another argument on the same side, still more clear and conclusive, we should

have expatiated on it at greater length. Let us briefly advert to it before we proceed to the main reason, on which we ground our general affirmation, that taxes are not paid either by capitalists or labourers; or, to state the principle in more unexceptionable language, that they receive full compensation for the taxes which they do pay; the one in higher profits, and the other in higher wages, than without the taxes they would have received.

4. This argument which, in point of strength and obviousness, holds, in our estimation, but a collateral or subsidiary rank, when compared with the one on which we should feel inclined to rest the cause, is still worthy of being noticed, because it helps to explain the speed, wherewith a compensation arises to the capitalist and labourer, for those taxes which ostensibly fall upon them. The principle of the argument is, that whatever causes a more rapid, or rather a more copious circulation of money, without at the same time increasing the supply of commodities, raises the money price of them. We can thus conceive one way in which a capitalist might obtain, at least in as far as circulating capital is concerned, an almost immediate compensation for a tax on profits. If, previous to such a tax, there be an hundred millions annually laid out in bringing goods to market, which are there sold for a hundred and ten millions, this capital is replaced with a profit of ten millions to its owners. But should a tax of ten per cent. be laid upon these profits, this, in the first instance, affects not the ability of those who purchase to the extent of a hundred and ten millions, seeing that

the tax is laid upon the capitalists and not upon their customers; and, in the second instance, it enriches government to the extent of one million. Suppose this million to be expended by government in the purchase of commodities, then would the hundred millions of capital, after the tax of one million upon the owners, be replaced by a hundred and eleven, instead of a hundred and ten millions; or, in other words, the tax which they pay to government would reciprocate back upon themselves, in a consequent rise of the money-price of the commodities wherein they deal.

5. And the same is still more palpably true of a tax on the wages of labour. Should a hundred millions be given annually in wages, and government lay an impost of ten per cent. upon the labourers, the ability of the original hirers to make offer of a hundred millions next year for service, is not at all affected by such a tax. But then the effect of it is, that it enables government to compete with them effectually in the labour market, to the extent of an additional ten millions; or, in other words, a hundred and ten millions may now be brought annually forward for the purchase of labour, instead of a hundred millions as before. But as there is no additional supply of labour by this process, the money-price of labour would just rise to the full amount of the tax which has been laid upon it. The labourers would obtain a full indemnity for the tax, by the produce of it coming almost immediately back upon themselves. Insomuch, that were a poll-tax of five pounds a-year laid upon each labourer, we hold that an almost

instant compensation would take place, by a rise to the same extent in the money-price of labour. He bears it ostensibly, but not actually. In point of semblance, it is a tax upon him; but, in point of real incidence and effect, it is wholly upon his employers.

6. Before we take leave of this argument, let us state it in terms of greater generality. Let, on the one hand, the quantity of capital and labour in the country remain unchanged, and, on the other, the power of replacing the capital, and remunerating the labour also remain unchanged—and, however the latter power shall be broken down or divided, profits will remain the same, and wages the same. The effect of a tax on profit, or of a tax upon wages, would just be to bring an additional quantity of money, to the extent of the tax, into the market for goods, or the market for labour; and, to that extent, raise the money-price of both. The effect, again, of a tax upon net rent, would be, to diminish the purchasing power of the landlords; to the extent only, however, that the purchasing power of the government was increased; and, without any increase of money-price, profits and wages would continue in name, as well as in substance, what they were before. The operation of a tax on profits and wages would be nominally to raise the income both of capitalists and labourers; though, substantially, they would continue what they were. If the tax were laid upon net rent, it would diminish the income of landlords without raising money-prices; and, therefore, without raising the income of the other two

classes, either nominally or substantially. After the imposition of such a tax, the united expenditure of the landlords and government would be equal to the entire expenditure of the landlords before; and, under the new system of an expenditure undiminished in its amount, and only changed in its distribution, we should behold both capitalists and labourers in possession of the same money, as well as the same real income as formerly

7. The same reasoning applies to every tax on those commodities which enter into the maintenance, either of capitalists or labourers; so as to show, that they can make as effectual escapes from the indirect as from the direct taxes which are laid upon them. We are sensible, at the same time, of the many evasions which might be practised, to obscure, if not to frustrate this argument; and of the many adjustments which it were necessary to make, ere we could fully meet all the difficulties that might be cast in its way. But we feel how superfluous it were to take the more laborious, when there is a shorter and easier path by which to arrive at our conclusion. We think that the argument employed hitherto, serves well to account for the very instant compensation which accrues to capitalists and labourers, when taxes are laid, either on their expenditure or their income. But whether this argument shall be sustained or not, there is still another, which proves irresistibly to our minds, that, in point of ultimate and permanent effect, taxes do not fall on either of these classes; a position which will be all the more convincing, if we but attend to the fundamental and efficient principles by which

both the rate of profit, and the wages of labour are determined.

8. We shall, in the first instance, keep out of sight the effect which taxation may have in contracting the agriculture of a country; and that, for the purpose of bringing out singly, and therefore more clearly, the main reason why, ultimately, the income of neither capitalists nor labourers can be trenched upon by taxation. We shall, after establishing this, take the agriculture into account, in order to complete our whole view of this subject.

9. If we but adverted to the dependence which profit and wages have on a mental or moral cause, we should at once perceive, of both these elements, how little either of them can be affected by taxation. Of the first of them, profit, we know that, *other circumstances remaining the same*, it falls with every increase of capital, and rises with every diminution of it. This circumstance will at once let us see, that its rate depends on the taste and choice of the capitalists themselves; that is, on the proportion which their inclination to save bears to their inclination to spend. If the whole amount of revenue arising from profit be ten millions in the year, and it be the collective will of the capitalists to spend that sum annually; then profit undergoes no variation. If they spend less than this, capital increases and profits fall. If they spend more, capital decreases and profits rise. With this element brought into the computation, it will be perceived, how a tax might be laid, in the first instance, upon profit, and yet in effect not be paid by the receivers of profit. They have only to

persevere in their wonted habits of expenditure and indulgence, and they can throw the whole burden of the tax upon their customers. Let it but be their collective will, to spend on their own gratification ten millions in the year, and the imposition upon them of a tax to the extent of one million, need not trench on their ability to maintain this expenditure. If their capital of a hundred millions was, previous to the tax, replaced by a hundred and ten; then, if after the tax they should continue to spend the ten millions and to pay the one, this would reduce their capital to ninety-nine millions; when, in the consequent higher prices of next year, they might have a full compensation for the tax. Let the replacing power, notwithstanding the tax, continue as before, at a hundred and ten millions; this sum, given in return for the ninety and nine, would raise the profit from ten to eleven millions, and so meet the whole imposition that had been made on this branch of the national revenue. The burden would thus be effectually thrown off from the capitalists, and laid on those who purchase their commodities.

10. And the same would be the result of a tax upon wages. *Other circumstances still being equal*, they fall with the increase, and rise with the decrease of the population. The rate of wages, therefore, has a close dependence on the proportion which the inclination of the people for marriage, bears to their inclination for the comforts and the decencies of life. In other words, it is ultimately decided by a mental or a moral cause. Give the people a high standard of enjoyment, and, rather

than sink beneath it, they will postpone matrimony for a season; or, in other words, we should have later marriages and smaller families. Through the medium of popular intelligence and virtue, this result will be permanently arrived at—and through no other medium. The rate of wages is fixed by the collective will of the people themselves. They are the arbiters of their own condition; having absolute control over that element on which there hinges the amount of their remuneration for labour; and, if they choose not to exert that control, there is positively no other expedient by which a commonwealth can be saved from the oppression of an underpaid and degraded peasantry. But if, on the one hand, no devices of philanthropy can save a population of sordid and grovelling habits, from that most over-mastering of all oppressions, the oppression of their own numbers—on the other hand, no weight of imposts can permanently depress a moral and educated people beneath that elevated position which themselves have fixed upon, and which themselves are abundantly able to maintain. This alliance between a people's character, and a people's comfort, is far the most valuable lesson in political science, and is convertible to the most precious applications which can be made of it. We do not think that even the immediate effect, or at least the effect beyond one year, of a tax on wages, is to lessen the remuneration of the labourer; but even if it had, it could have no such effect permanently. It could not reduce the economic state or condition of men, who have an absolute dictation over the proportion between the demand for labour and the

supply of it. They can countervail the operation of such a tax by their habits ; and, having unlimited command over the supply of labour, they can, by a moral economic check on the magnitude of this supply, sustain, in the midst of all adverse elements, whether physical or political, the attitude of an erect and well-conditioned peasantry.

11. A tax on profit leaves the capitalists at freedom to embark less of capital on business than before ; and, failing an immediate rise on the price of their commodities, if, on the average, they choose to keep up their wonted personal and household expenditure, and the tax compel them, for this purpose, to trench upon their capital, they have, at length, a full compensation in the increased profits of trade. A tax on wages leaves the labourers at liberty to marry later than before; and, failing an immediate rise on the money-price of work, if, on the average, they choose to postpone marriage, till they are enabled to enter upon it without any compromise of their wonted enjoyments, they may at length from a lessened population, have an equally full compensation in the consequent rise of the value of labour. A certain average style of expenditure, resolutely adhered to by manufacturers and merchants, could, through the medium of a diminished capital, act upon profit, so as to yield them an indemnification for their tax ; and the same principle, a certain average style of expenditure, resolutely adhered to by labourers, could, through the medium of a diminished population, act upon wages, so as to yield them the same indemnification. Both classes, ultimately speaking, are alike exonerated

from the weight of taxation; and in the increased price, whether of commodities or labour, the whole burden of it is transferred to the proprietors of the soil.

12. These principles serve to demonstrate, that a tax on commodities falls as little upon capitalists and labourers, as either a tax on profits does upon the one, or as a tax on wages does upon the other. It matters not, whether the attempt to reduce their standard of enjoyment, be made by a direct assessment on their income, or by an impost on the articles which they use. Both attempts can be alike resisted, by a resolute adherence on their parts to their respective standards of enjoyment, and their resistance can by each be carried into effect; that of the former class, through the medium of a retardation, or even a diminution, effected on the capital, by means of an expenditure which they will not consent to reduce; and that of the latter class, through the medium of a retardation, or even a diminution, effected on the population, by means of the moral preventive check, whose effect is to sustain that style and habit of enjoyment among labourers, which they will not consent to let down. It is thus that their collective will can maintain for them the level, whether it be a high or a low one, in which they choose to acquiesce; and that this level, it is in their power to uphold, in opposition to all taxes, whether on profits, on wages, or on commodities. They hold in their hands, in fact, the two instruments of capital and population, which they might regulate at pleasure; and thus it is, that every tax, which, without such

command, would depress their condition, may be effectually countervailed.

13. The general conception is, that dealers can ensure their own escape from a tax upon their commodities, by laying it through means of a higher price upon their customers; when that tax is a partial one, or does not reach to all commodities. And the way, it is imagined, in which they do make their escape, is by withdrawing a portion of capital from the trade which is taxed, to that which is not taxed; in which case, the price rises in the former trade, and so transfers the burden of the taxation which has been laid upon it, from the dealer to the consumer. But if this be the only way in which capitalists can escape from taxation, every new tax on commodities, however partial, would be attended by a general fall of profits. The transference of capital from a taxed to an untaxed trade, will of course raise prices in the former, but will depress them in the latter; so as, after an equilibrium is established, to depress somewhat the general rate of profit. If the general rate of profit be ten per cent., and a tax of ten per cent. be laid upon sugar, this would drive off so much capital from the sugar-trade, and so raise its price to the consumer. But if there be no other outlet for the withdrawn capital than other trades, then its investiture in these will bring down their profits, till an equilibrium be established among all the trades; when, after this transference, the general profit on all commodities might be imagined to fall down to nine per cent But at this rate, profit would be subject to succes sive deductions, with every new tax laid upon com-

modities, till at length we might imagine a general impost of ten per cent. carried round the whole circle of commerce; when, if there be truth in the representation frequently given, all profit would be annihilated, and so all trade come to a stand from the want of inducement to continue it. But this is so manifestly absurd, that there must be some other outlet for the capital withdrawn from the trade that is taxed, than that of vesting it as capital in other employments. Now it can, and often does, find such an outlet, by being turned to the purpose of a revenue, and thus absorbed in the expenditure of capitalists. This is the way, then, in which they have a control over profits, and a refuge from the effects of taxation. They can not only withdraw capital from one business to another, but they can withdraw it in part from all business; and, by thus limiting the extent of its application, they can counteract the whole operation of a tax on their commodities, by such a rise in their price, as will shift the burden of it entirely to the consumers. It will be allowed on all hands, that if taxes can be made in any way to fall upon profit, capital will not *accumulate* so fast as it would otherwise have done; and so *future* prices will be higher than they would otherwise have been. And it is just as obvious, that if, in virtue of taxes, capital is not at this moment *applied* so plentifully as it would otherwise have been, *present* prices must be higher than they would otherwise have been. All we need, then, for the establishment of our position, is the *postulatum*, that taxation, which restrains the future accumulation of capital, will also, if the holders of

capital so choose, restrain the present application of it. In virtue of the future increase of capital being restrained, prices will not be so low at some future time as they otherwise would have been. In virtue of its present application being restrained, prices are not so low at the present time as they otherwise would have been. In other words, as without the tax prices would have been so much lower, with the tax they are as much higher; and in these higher prices, the capitalist gets his full indemnification. And the labourer can find his way at length to the same immunity. Both have that state of things within their reach, in which they can alike make head, or stand their ground, against the imposts of government.

14. But though the principle we have now attempted to unfold, is competent to achieve a full immunity for these two classes, from the burden of taxation, the effect may be suspended for a time, in consequence of the influence which certain sorts of taxation have upon agriculture. The most interesting conclusions may be gathered from this part of the subject. We have often said of the extreme limit of cultivation, that it, of all others, is the place where the greatest lessons in economical science are to be learned. It will serve to modify some of our former positions, and lead to the establishment of new ones, if we attend to the effect which the different species of taxation produce upon this limit.

15. First, then, a tax on net rent would not restrain cultivation. It might somewhat retard the progress of it; but, certainly, there is nothing in

such a tax, to prevent the agriculture from being carried as far down among the inferior soils, as if the landlords had been subjected to no such burden. We are quite aware of a retardation that might be caused by a slower accumulation of capital among the proprietors. But capital will arise, and has arisen, in other quarters of society; so that, in fact, its tendency is to overflow beyond the possibility of its profitable investiture, whether in the business of husbandry, or in any other business whatever. In these circumstances, the cultivation will soon be carried as far with a tax upon net rent as without one. The land that is last entered on, if it pay no rent, is subject to no burden from the tax. The land immediately above it in the scale, does pay rent; and this rent is subject to a fractional deduction in consequence of the tax. But the recipient, the landlord, will not now refuse to let out this land, because he only gets half-a-crown, instead of five shillings from the acre of it. Previous to the tax, he does not stop the letting of his land at the point, where it only yielded him half-a-crown the acre—and neither will he still. The truth is, that in giving over a farm to cultivation, he commits the whole soil of it, with all its varieties, to the management of the tenant, who will cultivate every acre of it that can yield him a profit; whether or not, over and above this, it yields an excess, which goes in the shape of rent to the landlord. Let this excess be shared as it may between his landlord and the government, it affects not his operations; and that, because it affects not the capability of the land last entered upon, to give

him the return of an adequate profit for the expenses of its cultivation. What this profit shall be depends upon himself, or rather upon the collective will of all the capitalists in the land; who, either by their accumulations can reduce the profit, or by their expenditure can uphold, nay, augment it at their pleasure

16. Again, a tax upon luxuries, in as far as they are used only by the landlord, would just, in point of economic effect, be tantamount to a tax on the net rent. It would not lie as a burden on the cultivation at all. The domain of agriculture would remain as widely extended as before. All the land lying fully within this domain, would still yield a rent to the landlord; while that placed along the margin, or the land last entered on, would retain its capabilities for yielding a satisfactory profit to the tenant, however the rent of the proprietor might be encroached upon by the demands of the government.

17. But, thirdly, a tax on profit, or even on the luxuries used by those whose revenue lies in profit, has a limiting effect on cultivation. We have already proved how it is, that capitalists can find their compensation, either for a tax upon income, or upon the commodities on which that income is expended. Should they choose to maintain their wonted establishment, and pay all their taxes to the bargain; this latter payment, by encroaching on the capital, keeps up the profit; and the tax is paid, not out of their income, but out of the higher prices now laid on the commodities in which they deal. This, in the first instance, will operate by

a contraction on the agriculture, from adding to the price of the second necessaries of life, and so adding to the expenses of farm management. And besides, like all other capitalists, farmers will refuse to embark more of capital on their business, than what they can obtain a satisfying return for; or, in other words, they will refuse to enter on the cultivation of land which returns not a certain net profit to themselves; or which enlarges not that profit when its power is trenched upon, of commanding for them their wonted enjoyments, by the imposition of a tax on the articles which they use. This, then, is the effect of a tax which goes to limit the income of capitalists, or to limit the amount of their enjoyment in the expenditure of that income. Farmers will not carry their agriculture so far down as otherwise they would have done. They will stop short at that better soil, out of whose returns they can both pay the tax with the augmented expenses, and remunerate themselves. The agriculture is contracted; or, the effect of such taxes is a lessening of the country's subsistence, a lessening of the country's population.

18. And, lastly, the same is still more palpably and largely the effect of a tax, either on wages or on any of those commodities which enter into the maintenance of labourers. The land last entered on must at least yield a produce, which can feed the agricultural labourers employed on it, and their secondaries. But by a tax, either on the wages of labour, or on any of those commodities which enter into the maintenance of labour, more than this is exacted from the last cultivated land. It must not

us to determine whether the account, which we have now given, of our nature be of an experimental or of a visionary character. If there be other tokens of affection than the one act of giving money, and these tokens be exhibited; if there be other marks of good-will than the distribution of a gold and a silver which he no longer has to bestow, and these marks be authentically seen and read of all men, upon his person; if, without the means of his former liberality, his present love be only verified in its naked existence, or if it announce its reality by such signs as nature has annexed to the feeling, and as every partaker of that nature knows well how to interpret; if, by the perseverance of months, he has schooled away every suspicion of hypocrisy, and, in the toils and the services of an unwearied assiduity, he has, at length, earned the conviction that all their hopes and all their anxieties are his own; if, when he knocks at their doors, it should only be on the simple errand of a cordial inquiry, or an imploring advice, either to themselves or to their children;—the man may positively have nothing but his heart to give, but, in giving that, he has touched the very principle of our nature which brings all its hidden machinery under his power. This ascendancy of the moral over the material part of our constitution is no romance and no fabrication of poetry. It is exemplified every day, in the living and the ordinary walk of human experience. There is not, on the face of our world, one neighbourhood of contiguous families, either so poor or so profligate as to withstand these repeated demonstrations; and that sullenness of

character which no bribery could reduce, and which gathers a deeper and more determined gloom, when the hand of authority is applied to it, has been rendered tractable as childhood, under the mighty and the magical spell of a meek, and enduring, and undissembled charity.

The law of reciprocal attraction between one heart and another is a law of nature as well as of Christianity; insomuch, that no sooner does the regard of a philanthropist for the people of his district come to be recognised, than their regard for him, and that, too, both from the converted and unconverted, will attest of what kind of materials humanity is formed. The effect is so beautiful that one cannot expatiate upon it, without meeting the imputation of romance from those hackneyed, and secular, and incredulous men, whose eyes have never once been directed to this field of observation; but the effect is, at the same time, so certain as to stamp on what we say all the soundness of an experimental affirmation. Christianity, indeed, is the alone agent by which the elevating power of a sentiment so pure and so celestial, as to have the effect of poetry upon the imagination, will ever be realised on the familiar and homebred scenes of ordinary life. But it is a most inviting circumstance, in the great enterprise of spreading the light and influence of Christianity around a population, when one sees that the very humblest of its zealous votaries can thus work his secure and certain way to the universal acceptance of his fellows. Let suspicion be but once dissipated; and the enmity of nature be disarmed, by the true and

touching demonstrations of a real principle of kindness; and ridicule have ceased from its uproar; and contempt have discharged all its vociferations; and the man's worth and benevolence become manifest as day—then, though the ministration of gold and silver be that which fortune hath altogether denied him, it is both very striking and very encouraging to behold, how, in spite of themselves, he steals the hearts of the people away from them; how, as if by the operation of some mystic spell, the most restless and profligate of them all feel the softening influence of his presence and of his doings; and how, in the cheap and humble services of tending their children, and visiting their sick, and ministering in sacred exercises at the couch of the dying, and filling up his opportunities of intercourse with the utterance of holy advice, and the exhibition of holy example, there is, in these simple and unaccompanied attentions, a charm felt and welcomed, even in the most polluted atmosphere that ever settled around the most corrupt and crowded of human habitations.

This is not credited by many of our citizens; and men who deliver themselves in a tone of grave, and respectable, and imposing experience, may be heard to affirm, that, unless an elder be vested with a power of administration over the public money, he will be an unwelcome visitor with the general run of our families—that he will meet with few to bid him God-speed, on the single and abstract errand of Christianity—and that, while the old system of payments without prayers was acceptable enough, the new system of prayers

without payments will banish the whole host of eldership in our city from the acceptance and good-will of its inhabitants. Surely this is a matter of proof and not of probability—a thing that may be committed to the decision of experience, instead of being left to the contentions of reason or of sophistry. Let an elder count it his duty to hold a habitual intercourse of kindness with the people of his district, and, for this purpose, devote but a few hours in the week to their highest interest; out of the fulness of a heart animated with good-will to men, and, in particular, with that good-will which points to the good of their eternity, let him make use of every practical expedient for spreading amongst them the light and influence of the gospel; let it be his constant aim to warn the unruly, to comfort the afflicted, to stimulate the education of children, to press the duty of attending ordinances, to make use of all his persuasion in private, and of all his influence to promote such public and parochial measures as may forward the simple design of making our people good, and pious, and holy; —then, though he should go forth among them stript of power, and patronage, and pecuniary administrations; though his honest and Christian good-will be all he has to recommend him; though the various secularities, by which the offices of our Church have been polluted and degraded, shall be conclusively done away, and the whole armoury of our influence among the people be reduced to the simple elements of good-will, and friendship, and personal labour, and unwearied earnestness in the prosecution of their spiritual welfare:—yet, with

these, and these alone, will any of our elders, at length, find a welcome in every heart, and a home in every habitation. Others may then take up the ministration which he has put away. But it will be his presence which will awaken the finest glow of kindly and reverential feeling among our population. Though, out of any public treasury, he neither has gold nor silver to give, yet, let him just do with his means and his opportunities as every Christian should do, and feel as every Christian should feel, and he will rarely meet with a family so poor as to undervalue his attentions, or a family so profligate as to persist in despising them.

All the dispensations of Providence, and all the great events in the train of human history, are on the side of the Christian philanthropist. He has only to watch his opportunity; and there is not a family so hardened in the ways of impiety, where he may not, in time, establish himself. The stoutest-hearted sinner he may have to deal with must, in a few little years, meet with something to soften and to bring him down. Death may make its inroads upon his household; and disease may come, with its symptoms of threatening import, upon his own person; and, in that bed of sickness which he dreads to be his last, may the terrors and reproaches of conscience be preparing a welcome for the elder of his district; and he who wont to laugh the ministrations of his Christian friend away from him will, at length, send an imploring message and supplicate his prayers. Such is the omnipotence of Christian charity. At the very outset of its

enterprise, it will find a great and an effectual door opened to it: and, in the course of months, its own perseverance will work for it; and Providence will work for it; and the mournful changes which take place in every family will work for it; and all the frailties of misfortune and mortality to which our nature is liable will work for it: and thus may one single individual, acting in the capacity of a Christian friend, and ever on the alert with all the aid of Christian counsel, and all the offices of Christian sympathy, in behalf of his assigned population, be the honoured instrument of reviving another spirit, and setting up another style of practice and observation, in the midst of them. Thus may he obtain a secure hold of ascendancy over the affections of hundreds; and, like unto a leaven for good, in the neighbourhood which has been entrusted to his care, may he, by the blessing of God, infuse into that mass of human immortality with which he is associated the fermentation of such holy desires, and penitential feelings, and earnest aspirations, and close inquiries after the truth, as may, at length, issue in the solid result of many being called out of darkness into light, of many being turned unto righteousness.

The Christian elder who has resigned the temporalities of his office should not think that, on that account, he has little in his power. His presence has a power. His advice has a power. His friendship has a power. The moral energy of his kind attentions and Christian arguments has a power. His prayers at the bed of sickness, and at the funeral of a departed parishioner, have a power. The

books that he recommends to his people, and the minister whom he prevails on them to hear, and the habit of regular attendance upon the ordinances to which he introduces them, have a power. His supplications to God for them, in secret, have a power. Dependence upon Him, and upon His blessing, for the success of his own feeble endeavours, has a power. And when all these are brought to bear on the rising generation; when the children have learned both to know and to love him; when they come to feel the force of his approbation, and, on every recurring visit receive a fresh impulse from him to diligence at school, and dutiful behaviour out of it; when the capabilities of his simple Christian relationship with the people thus come to be estimated:—it is not saying too much, to say that, with such as him, there lies the precious interest of the growth and transmission of Christianity, in the age that is now passing over us; and that, in respect of his own selected neighbourhood, he is the depositary of the moral and spiritual destinies of the future age.

We shall conclude this department of the subject with three distinct observations relative to the office and duties of the eldership.

First. We are well aware how widely the practice of our generation has diverged from the practice of our ancestors; how the temporal, which form their superinduced duties, have taken place of the spiritual, which form the primitive and essential duties of the eldership; how, within the limits of our Establishment, the lay office-bearers of the Church, are fast renouncing the whole work of

ministering from house to house, in prayer, and in exhortation, and in the dispensation of spiritual comfort and advice, among the sick, or the disconsolate, or the dying. We are aware that a reformation, in this department, can only be brought about by an influence of a more gentle, and moral, and withal more effectual kind than that of authority. But we almost know nothing of greater importance than to have a connexion of this kind established between the elders and the population of those districts which are respectively assigned to them. We know of nothing which will tell more effectually, in the way of humanizing our families, than if so pure an intercourse was going on, as an intercourse of piety, between our men of respectable station, on the one hand, and our men of labour and of poverty, on the other. We know of nothing which would serve more powerfully to link and to harmonize into one fine system of social order, the various classes of our community. We know not a finer exhibition, on the one hand, than the man of wealth acting the man of piety, and throwing the goodly adornment of Christian benevolence over the splendour of those civil distinctions, which give a weight and a lustre to his name in society. And we know not a more wholesome influence, on the other hand, than that which such a man must carry around with him, when he enters the habitations of our operatives; and dignifies, by his visits, the people who occupy them; and talks with them, as the heirs of one hope and of one immortality; and cheers, by the united power of religion and of sympathy, the very humblest of misfortune's generation; and convinces

them of a real and a longing affection after their best interests; and leaves them with the impression that here, at least, is one man who is our friend; that here, at least, is one proof that we are not altogether destitute of consideration amongst our fellows; that here, at least, is one quarter on which our confidence may rest; ay, and amidst all the insignificance in which we lie buried from the observation of society, we are sure, at least, of one who, in the most exalted sense of the term, is now ready to befriend us, and to look after us, and to care for us.

Secondly. Those who have entered on the important and honourable office of the eldership, should have a full impression of its sacredness. We are fully aware that there is not a professing Christian who does not forfeit all title to the name and character of a Christian, if he do not honestly, and with all the energies of his soul, aspire at being not merely almost, but altogether a disciple of the Lord Jesus. It is the duty of the obscurest individual in a congregation, to be as heavenly in his desires, and as peculiar in the whole style of his behaviour, and as upright in his transactions, and as circumspect in his walk, and as devoted in heart and in service to the God of his redemption, as the minister who labours amongst them in word and in doctrine, or as the elders that assist him in the administration of ordinances, or as the most conspicuous among the office-bearers of the church with which he is connected. But they should remember that the very circumstance of being conspicuous forms a double call upon their attention to certain

prescribed duties of the New Testament. It is this which gives so peculiar an importance to their example. It is this which, by making their light shine before men, renders it a more powerful instrument for glorifying God. And it is this, too, which stamps a tenfold malignity upon their misconduct. And under the impression of this, should they be careful lest their good be evil spoken of—to be, in all things, an example to the flock over which God hath appointed them the overseers—to remember that their conduct has a more decided bearing upon others than it had formerly—and that, as it is their duty to look, not to their own things, but to the things of others also, so it is their most solemn and imperious obligation, to take heed, and give no just offence, in any thing, that the religion of which they are the declared and the visible functionaries, be not blamed. We know not how a greater outrage can be practised on Christianity, we know not how a deadlier wound can be given to its interest and its reputation in the world, we know not how a sorer infliction can be devised on a part of greater tenderness—than for a man to usurp a place of authority and of lofty standing, in the church of our Redeemer, and then to exhibit such a life, and to maintain such a lukewarm indifference, and to hold out such a conformity to the world, as to all the levities, and all the secularities which abound in it; and above all, so to deform the path of his own personal history, by what is profane, and profligate, and unseemly, that the report of his misdoings shall spread itself over the neighbourhood, and, into whatever company it may

enter, it shall scandalise the friends of Jesus, and become matter of triumph and of bitter derision to His enemies.

Thirdly. The gentlemen who have been invested with this office should make a conscience of their attendance upon the needs and the demands of their respective population; not to slur and superficialise the matter, but to give to it strength, and earnestness, and persevering attention; not to enter upon their offices, as if they were so many sinecures, but to feel that certain duties are annexed to them, and that, for the right and attentive performance of these duties, a weight of responsibility is lying upon them. In each parish there is an ample field for the exercise of such duties; a field so extensive that, if left to the solitary management of one individual, must be left in a great measure neglected; a field greatly beyond the time and the strength of the minister; a field which he is not able to cultivate to the full, by his own personal exertions, and to do justice to which he must avail himself of the assistance of his elders. And sure we are that, with a manageable extent of walk assigned to each of them, they would, at length, come to feel that to be an enjoyment which they may, perhaps, for some time, feel to be an oppression; and, though delicacy and inexperience should, at first, operate as restraints to their acting in the capacity of spiritual labourers, yet habitual and intimate intercourse with their people will soon reconcile them to their new employment, and render it a smooth, a pleasant, and an interesting concern.

It might be expected that, ere bringing this topic

to a close, we should deliver a few rules for the right discharge and exercise of deaconship. We do not plead for this as a permanent institution of the church, believing as we do, that it were vastly better for the people, if all public charity, for the relief of indigence, were, as soon as possible, done away. Still, however, such an order of men might be of important service, in conducting society back again to its natural state, as it respects pauperism. And we are thoroughly persuaded that, by acting conformably to the spirit of the few hints which follow, they will arrive at the conviction, that all public and ostensible charity might very safely be dispensed with.

First. The poor will feel themselves greatly soothed and conciliated, by their ready attention, by their friendly counsels, by their acts of advice and assistance as to the conduct of their little affairs; by the mere civility and courteousness which marks their transactions with them; and that these will positively go farther to gladden their hearts, and to endear their persons to them, than all the money which they may find it necessary to award for the support of their indigent families.

Secondly. It will be said that, by this unrestrained facility of manner, they will lay themselves open to the inroads of the worthless and the undeserving. In answer to this, we ask if there be not room enough, in a man's character, for the wisdom of the serpent along with the gentleness of the dove? That we may ward off the undeserving poor, is it necessary to put on a stern and repulsive front against all the poor who offer themselves to our

observation? The way, we apprehend, is to put forth patience, and attention, and to be in the ready attitude of prepared and immediate service for all applications, in the first instance; to conduct every examination with temper and kindness: and surely it is possible to do this, and, at the same time, to conduct it with vigilance. Exercise will soon sharpen their discrimination in these matters; and when they have got a thoroughly ascertained state of the claim which has been advanced, and they find that it is not a valid one—then let them put forth their firmness; then let them make a display of calm and settled determination; then let them show their people that they have judgment as well as feeling, and that they know how to combine the habit of justice to the public, by not squandering their money on unsuitable objects, with the habit of sympathy for genuine distress, and of ready attention to the merits of every application.

On the strength of this principle, it will be in the power of a deacon to check, on the one hand, all unreasonable applications; and, on the other, still to preserve all that homage of attachment, which his kindness to real sufferers, and his candour and courteousness to all, are fitted to secure for him. His people will not like him the worse that they see him acting in a sound, judicious, and experimental way with them. They know how to appreciate good sense, as well as we; and they admire it, and they have an actual liking for it. They are scandalised when they see kindness lavished upon the unworthy. Though they like attention and sympathy, they have a greater esteem

for them, when they see them combined with the exercise of judgment and a good understanding: and in proportion therefore as a deacon evinces himself to have the faculty of rejecting those claims which are groundless, in that very proportion will a real sufferer esteem that act of preference, by which he has had the discernment to single out his claim, and the benevolence most soothingly and most sympathisingly, and most amply, to provide for it.

But, lastly, we know not a more interesting case that can be submitted to a deacon, than when an applicant proposes, for the first time, to draw relief from a public charity. This he is often compelled to do, from some temporary distress, that hangs over his family: and if the emergency could be got over without a public and degrading exposure of him who labours under it, there would both be a most substantial saving of the public fund, and a most soothing act of kindness rendered to the person who is applying for it. If by the influence of the deacon, or that of his friends, work could be provided for a man in such circumstances, or some private and delicate mode of relief be devised for him, then we know not in what other way he could more effectually establish himself as the most valuable servant of the public, and as the best and kindest friend of his own immediate population. All will depend upon the earnestness and the sense of duty which he brings to his offices along with him; and we should be much disappointed if it be not the result of his practice and observation, in this walk of philanthropy, that, after

all, the cause of human indigence may be fully confided to the sympathy of individuals, and that even the demise of his own order is an essential step towards the conclusive establishment of that state of things where nature and Christianity will render their most effectual contributions, for alleviating the wants and the miseries of the species.

We may afterwards enlarge on the reasons why we regard a deaconship in the light of a temporary expedient, for the purpose of reducing that pauperism which has been accumulated upon us, under a former system of administration, rather than as an institution that is at all essential to the permanent well-being of a parish. So long as any method of public relief for indigence is perpetuated amongst us, whether by assessment or voluntary collection, we hold it greatly better that its whole conduct and management be devolved upon deacons than upon elders. But we are, at the same time, persuaded that it is not only a most practicable thing for an order of deacons so to manage, as, in a few years, to transfer the whole expenses of the parochial poor from a compulsory to a gratuitous fund—we are further persuaded, that, as the result of their experience, these very men will come to see with what perfect safety, and even improvement, to the comfort of the lower orders, the latter fund may also be dispensed with; and thus their labours may come to be dispensed with, after having reached this most satisfactory of all consummations, that of having led the people to repose on their own capabilities: For, by giving them to understand that individual sympathy, and their own foreseeing pru-

dence, are all they have to look for, against the day of poverty, they will, at length, re-open those mighty sources which an artificial charity had sealed; and out of which nature, when not tortured and tampered with, as she has been, by the intermeddling spirit of legislation, provides far more abundantly for the wants of all her children.

CHAPTER VIII.

On Sabbath Schools.

It is well, that in the various religious establishments of Europe, provision should have been made for the learning as well as for the subsistence of a regular clergy. It is well, when a teacher of the gospel, in addition to the strict literature of his own profession, is further accomplished in the general literature of the times. We do not hold it indispensable that all should be so accomplished. But that is a good course of education for the church, which will not only secure the possibility that every minister may be learned in theology, but also a chance, bordering upon certainty, that some of them shall attain an eminence of authority and respect, in the other sciences. Christianity should be provided with friends and defenders, in every quarter of human society; and there should be among them such a distribution of weapons, as may be adapted to all the varieties of that extended combat, which is ever going on between the church

and the world. And there is a special reason why the prejudices of philosophy against the gospel should, if possible, be met and mastered by men capable of standing on the very same arena, and plying the very same tactics, with the most powerful of its votaries ;—and that, not so much because of the individual benefit which may thereby be rendered to these philosophers, as because of their ascendant influence over the general mind of society; and because of the mischief that would ensue to myriads beside themselves, could an exhibition so degrading be held forth to the world, as that of Christianity which laid claim to the light of revelation, retiring abashed from the light of cultivated nature, and not daring the encounter, when men rich in academic lore, or lofty in general authorship, came forth in hostility against her.

It is mainly owing to the learning of the priesthood that Christianity has kept her ground on the higher platform of cultured and well educated humanity, and that she enters so largely, as a bright and much esteemed ingredient, into the body of our national literature. It is true that, in this way, she may compel an homage from many whom she cannot subdue unto the obedience of the faith ; and save herself from contempt, in a thousand instances, where she has utterly failed in her attempts at conversion. But it is well, whenever this degree of respect and acknowledgment can be obtained for her, among the upper classes of life ; and more especially in every free and enlightened nation, like our own, where the reigning authority is so much under the guidance

of the higher reason of the country,* it is of unspeakable benefit that Christianity has been so nobly upheld by the talent and erudition of her advocates. The fostering hand of the Legislature would soon have been withheld from all our Christian institutions, had the Christian system not been palpably recommended by those numerous pleadings, wherewith a schooled and accomplished clergy have so enriched the theological literature of our island. Nor do we believe that, in the face of public opinion, any political deference could have long been rendered to Christianity, had she been overborne, in her numerous conflicts with the pride and sophistry of able unbelievers. It is thus that we stand indebted to the learning of Christian ministers for the security of that great national apparatus of religious instruction, the utility of which we have already endeavoured to demonstrate; and hence, though learning does not, of itself, convert and Christianise a human soul, it may be instrumental in spreading and strengthening that canopy of protection, which is thrown, by our Establishment, over those humbler but more effective labourers, by whose parish ministrations it is, that the general mass of our population becomes leavened with the doctrines of the gospel, and Christianity is carried, with light, and comfort, and power, into the bosom of cottages.

But, though learning must be enlisted on the side of Christianity, for the purpose of upholding her in credit and acceptance, among influential men; yet it is not indispensable for the purpose of

* This was written 19 years ago.

conveying her moral and spiritual lessons into the heart of a disciple. The truth is, that many of the topics about which ecclesiastical learning is conversant, are exterior to the direct substance of that Bible which professes to be a written communication from God to man—such as the historic testimonies that may be quoted in favour of religion; and those church antiquities, to acquire the knowledge of which we must travel through many a volume of ponderous erudition; and at least the history, if not the matter, of the various controversies by which the Christian world has been agitated. We are aware that much of this controversy relates to the contents of the record, as well as to the credentials of the record. Yet, however its plainer passages may have been darkened by heretical sophistry on the one hand, and its obscure passages may have divided the opinion of critics and translators on the other; this does not hinder, that, from the Bible, and the English Bible, there may be made to emanate a flood of light, on the general mass of our English peasantry —that, to evolve this light, a high and artificial scholarship is neither necessary nor available—that, on the understanding of a man, unlettered in all that proceeds from halls or colleges, the Word of God may have made its sound, and wholesome, and sufficient impression; and that from him the impression may be reflected back again, on the understandings of many others, as unlettered as himself—that thus all, in the book of God's testimony which mainly goes so to enlighten a man, as to turn him into a Christian, may be made to pass

from one humble convert to his acquaintances and neighbours; and, without the learning which serves to acquire for Christianity the dignified though vague and general homage of the upper classes, he may, at least, be a fit agent for transmitting essential Christianity throughout the plebeianism that is around him.

To deny this, indeed, were to resist the affirmations of that very record in which all that may be known of Christianity is found. We are there told, and from the direct mouth of the Saviour, that things essential to salvation may be revealed unto babes, which lie hid from the wise and the prudent. The poor to whom the gospel is preached have a full share of this revelation. The Spirit of God, we are told, acts as a revealer; and yet it is not His office to make known any truths additional to those which are already engrossed in Scripture. The light that cometh from Him is a light which shineth on the page of inspiration, and causes us to discern only what is graven thereupon. The doctrine of the Bible is made known to us by this process, and nothing else. Under the tuition of God's Spirit, we only learn what has already been fully expressed by the letter of the Bible; but which, without His influence, can never be fully apprehended in its meaning, or felt in its power. It is thus that He communicates nothing at variance with the written testimony, and nothing which has not been already declared by the written testimony; though His influence be necessary, in order that the testimony be received. The operation may be illustrated by the way in which

an impression is given to any substance, through the means of a stamping instrument. The substance may be so hard and impracticable as to resist the impression, when a weak arm is put forth to urge forward the instrument; but it may be made to take in a full and a fair impression, when a strong arm is employed. And thus may it be with the impression of Bible doctrine, on moral and thinking and intelligent man. The Bible may be brought into contact with the mind of the reader; and learning, and talent, and all the forces that mere humanity can muster, may be made to aid the impression of it, and be wholly ineffectual. The Spirit of God may then undertake the office of an enlightener; and, in so doing, He may keep by the Bible as His alone instrument; and not one truth may pass in conveyance from Him to the spirit of that man, on whom He is operating, but simply and solely the truths which are taken off from the written Word of God; and all the Christianity that He teaches, and that He leaves graven on the hearts of His subjects, may just be a correct transcript of the Christianity that exists in the New Testament. And thus it is that a workman of humble scholarship may be transformed, not into an erratic and fanciful enthusiast, but into a sound Scriptural Christian—without one other religious tenet in his understanding than what is strictly and accurately defined by the literalities of the written record, and without one other religious feeling in his heart than what is most pertinently called forth by the moral influence of the truths which have thus been made known to him.

If there be truth in this representation, it will appear that the Bible can be no more dispensed with, for the purpose of putting the impress of Christianity on a human soul, than the stamping instrument can be dispensed with, for the purpose of fixing the device which it bears on the piece of matter that is submitted to it. The disciple's mind must be brought into contact with Scripture; and it is so, when he is employed, either in hearing, or reading, or pondering, what is written thereon. And it will further appear that the Spirit, in His work of making good an impress of Christianity on man, no more varies in one feature, or one lineament, from the Christianity that is already engraven on the indelible Word of God, than that hand, which simply bears upon a seal, either alters or effaces the inscription which is fastened by it on the substance to which it is applied. It is thus that all the pretences of enthusiasm may be refuted and exposed; and that, while the teaching of the Spirit is held to be indispensable, the soundness and proficiency of the taught still remain to be tried, and may be taken cognizance of, at the bar of the law and of the testimony. There is no licence given by this statement to the vagaries of a credulous and overheated imagination: being subject, as they all are, to the touchstone of a word that is immutable, and cannot pass away. We know it to be the fear of many, lest the doctrine of a special and spiritual illumination, taking place in every instance of conversion, should throw open the Christian world to an influx of fancies and fluctuations, that would be utterly interminable. But

the written record is the great barrier of defence against all such irregularities. There might be room for this apprehension, were it still the office of the Spirit to originate new and unheard of truths, in the minds that He enlightens. But this work has ceased long ago; and the Book in which the truths thus originated were treasured up has, for many centuries, had the seal of completeness set upon it; and the office of the Holy Ghost now is not to inform any one mind of novelties that are yet unrevealed, but simply to transcribe on the tablet of its understanding what has already been inscribed on the tablet of the written revelation. And thus it is both true, that it is through a distinct and personal work of the Holy Spirit, that each believer is called out of darkness into marvellous light—and that, in respect of the essentials of Christianity, there has been one stable and permanent belief among them all. It is like the telescope pointed to a distant landscape, which reveals the same objects to all the numerous and successive spectators; and so it is mainly one and the same doctrine that is held by the genuine disciples of all countries, and which has come unchangingly down, from generation to generation.

If it be thought that this statement serves very much to reduce the importance of human learning, let it be observed, on the other hand, that still to human learning there belongs an important function, in the matter of Christianity. One does not need to be the subject of a material impress upon his own person, in order to judge of the accordancy between the device that is submitted to his notice,

and the seal that is said to have conveyed it. Both may be foreign to himself: and yet he, by looking to the one and to the other, can see whether they are accurate counterparts. And, in like manner, a man of sagacity and of natural acquirement may never have received, upon his own heart, that impression of the Bible which the Holy Spirit alone has strength to effectuate; but still, if such an impression be offered to his notice, in the person of another, he may be able both to detect the spurious, and, in some measure, to recognise the genuine marks of correspondence between the contents of Scripture, on the one hand, and the creed, or character, of its professing disciple, on the other. It is well, when such a man looks, in the first instance, to the written Word; and, by aid of the grammar and lexicon and all the resources of philology, evinces the literal doctrine that is graven thereupon. It is also well, when he looks, in the second instance, to the human subject; and by aid, either of natural shrewdness, or of a keen metaphysical inspection into the *arcana* of character, drags forth to light that moral and intellectual picture which the doctrine of the Bible is said to have left upon the soul. If there be a single alleged convert upon earth, who cannot stand such a trial, when fairly conducted, he is a pretender, and wears only a counterfeit and not the genuine stamp of Christianity. And thus it is, that he who has no part whatever in the teaching that cometh from God, who is still a natural man, and has not received the things of the Spirit, may, to a certain extent, judge the

pretensions of him who conceives that the Holy Ghost has taken of the things of Christ, and shown them to his soul. He can institute a sound process of comparison between those testimonies of Scripture which a natural criticism has made palpable to him, and those traces upon the soul which a natural sagacity of observation has made palpable to him; and, without sharing himself in an unction from the Holy One, or being sealed by the Spirit of God into a personal meetness for the inheritance of the saints, still may he both be able to rectify and restrain the excesses of fanaticism, and also to recall the departures that heresy is making from the law and from the testimony.

The work of Bishop Horsley against Unitarianism is a work which erudition and natural talent are quite competent to the production of. It is the fruit of a learned and laborious research into ecclesiastical antiquities, and a vigorous argumentative application of the materials that he had gathered, to that controversy, on the field of which he obtained so proud and pre-eminent a conquest. We would not even so much as hazard a conjecture on the personal Christianity of this able and highly gifted individual. We simply affirm, that for the execution of the important service which he, at that time, rendered to the cause, his own personal religion was not indispensable; and, whether or not by the means of a spiritual discernment, he was enabled to take off, from the inscribed Christianity of the record, an effectual impression of it upon his own soul—it was well, that, by the natural expedients of profound sense and profound

scholarship, he cleared away that cloud in which his antagonist, Dr Priestley, might have shrouded the face of the record, both from the natural and spiritual discernment of other men. It is possible, both to know what the doctrine of the Bible is, and most skilfully and irresistibly to argument it, without having caught the impress of the doctrine upon one's own soul. It is possible for a man not to have come himself into effective personal contact with the seal of Holy Writ; and yet to demonstrate the characters of the seal, and to purge away its obscurity, and make it stand legibly out, which it must do, ere it can stand impressively out, to the view of others. There are many who look with an evil eye to the endowments of the English Church, and to the indolence of her dignitaries. But to that Church the theological literature of our nation stands indebted, for her best acquisitions; and we hold it a refreshing spectacle, at any time that meagre Socinianism pours forth a new supply of flippancies and errors, when we behold, as we have often done, an armed champion come forth, in full equipment, from some high and lettered retreat of that noble hierarchy; nor can we grudge her the wealth of all her endowments, when we think how well, under her venerable auspices, the battles of orthodoxy have been fought, —that, in this holy warfare, they are her sons and her scholars who are ever foremost in the field,— ready, at all times, to face the threatening mischief, and, by the might of their ponderous erudition, to overbear it.

But, if human talent be available to the pur-

pose of demonstrating the characters of the seal, it is also, in so far, available to the purpose of judging on the accuracy of the impression. The work, perhaps, which best exemplifies this, is that of President Edwards, on the conversions of New England; and in which he proposes to estimate their genuineness, by comparing the marks that had been left on the person of the disciple, with the marks that are inscribed on the Book of the law and of the testimony. He was certainly much aided, in his processes of discrimination upon this subject, by the circumstance of being a genuine convert himself; and, so, of being furnished with materials for the judgment, in his own heart, and that stood immediately submitted to the eye of his own consciousness. But yet no one could, without the metaphysical faculty wherewith nature had endowed him, have conducted so subtle, and at the same time, so sound and just an analysis, as he has done; and no one, without his power of insight among the mysteries of our nature,—a power which belonged to his mind, according to its original conformation,—could have so separated the authentic operation of the Word upon the character, from the errors and the impulses of human fancy. It is true that none but a spiritual man could have taken so minute a survey of that impression which the Holy Ghost was affirmed to have made, through the preaching of the Word, upon many, in a season of general awakening. But few, also, are the spiritual men, who could have taken so masterly a survey; and that, just because they wanted the faculties which could accomplish their possessor for a shrewd and

metaphysical discernment among the *penetralia* of the human constitution. It is thus that, by the light of nature, one may trace the characters which stand out upon the seal; and, by the light of nature, one may be helped, at least, to trace the characters that are left upon the human subject, in consequence of this supernal application. Fanaticism is kept in check by human reason, and the soberness of the faith is vindicated. The extravagance of all pretenders to a spiritual revelation is detected, and made manifest; and the true disciple stands the test he is submitted to, even at the bar of the natural understanding.

We cannot take leave of Edwards, without testifying the whole extent of the reverence that we bear him. On the *arena* of metaphysics, he stood the highest of all his cotemporaries; and that, too, at a time, when Hume was aiming his deadliest thrusts at the foundations of morality, and had thrown over the infidel cause the whole *eclat* of his reputation. The American divine affords, perhaps, the most wondrous example, in modern times, of one who stood richly gifted both in natural and in spiritual discernment—and we know not what most to admire in him, whether the deep philosophy that issued from his pen, or the humble and child-like piety that issued from his pulpit; whether, when, as an author, he deals forth upon his readers the subtleties of profoundest argument, or when, as a Christian minister, he deals forth upon his hearers the simplicities of the gospel; whether it is, when we witness the impression that he made, by his writings, on the schools and high

seats of literature, or the impression that he made, by his unlaboured addresses, on the plain consciences of a plain congregation. In the former capacity, he could estimate the genuineness of the Christianity that had before been fashioned on the person of a disciple; but it was in the latter capacity, and speaking of him as an instrument, that he fashioned it, as it were, with his own hands. In the former capacity, he sat in judgment, as a critic, on the resemblance that there was between the seal of God's Word, and the impression that had been made on the fleshly tablet of a human heart; in the latter capacity, he himself took up the seal, and gave the imprinting touch, by which the heart is conformed unto the obedience of the faith. The former was a speculative capacity, under which he acted as a connoisseur, who pronounced on the accordancy that obtained between the doctrine of the Bible, and the character that had been submitted to its influence;—the latter was an executive capacity, under which he acted as a practitioner, who brought about this accordancy, and so handled the doctrines of the Bible, as to mould and subordinate thereunto the character of the people with whom he had to deal. In the one, he was an overseer, who inspected and gave his deliverance on the quality of another's work; in the other, he was the workman himself: and while, as the philosopher, he could discern, and discern truly, between the sterling and the counterfeit, in Christianity—still it was as the humble and devoted pastor that Christianity was made, or Christianity was multiplied, in his hands.

Now, conceive these two faculties, which were exemplified in such rare and happy combination, on the person of Edwards, to be separated, the one from the other, and given respectively to two individuals. One of these would then be so gifted, as that he could apply the discriminating tests, by which to judge of Christianity; and the other of them would be so gifted as that, instrumentally speaking, he could make Christians. One of them could do what Edwards did, from the pulpit; another of them could do what Edwards did, from the press. Without such judges and overseers as the former, the faith of the Christian world might be occasionally disfigured by the excesses of fanaticism; but without such agents as the latter, faith might cease to be formed, and the abuses be got rid of only by getting rid of the whole stock upon which such abuses are occasionally grafted. It is here that churches, under the domination of a worldly and unsanctified priesthood, are apt to go astray. They confide the cause wherewith they are entrusted to the merely intellectual class of labourers; and they have overlooked, or rather have violently and impetuously resisted, the operative class of labourers. They conceive that all is to be done by regulation; and that nothing, but what is mischievous, is to be done by impulse. Their measures are generally all of a sedative, and few or none of them of a stimulating tendency. Their chief concern is to repress the pruriencies of religious zeal, and not to excite or foster the zeal itself. By this process they may deliver their Establishment of all extravagancies—so as that we shall no longer behold, within

its limits, any laughable or offensive caricature of Christianity. But who does not see that, by this process, they may also deliver the Establishment of Christianity altogether; and that all our exhibitions of genuine godliness may be made to disappear, under the same withering influence which deadens the excrescencies that occasionally spring from it. It is quite a possible thing for the same church to have a proud complacency in the lore, and argument, and professional science, of certain of its ministers; and, along with this, to have a proud contempt for the pious earnestness, and pious activity, of certain other of its ministers. In other words, it may applaud the talent by which Christianity is estimated, but discourage the talent by which Christianity is made. And thus while it continues to be graced by the literature and accomplishment of its members, may it come to be reduced into a kind of barren and useless inefficiency as to the great practical purposes for which it was ordained.

To judge of an impression requires one species of talent, to make an impression requires another. They both may exist, in very high perfection, with the same individual, as in the case already quoted. But they may also exist apart; and often, in particular, may the latter of the two be found, in great efficiency and vigour, when the former of the two may be utterly awanting. The right way for a church is to encourage both these talents to the uttermost; and not to prevent the evils of a bad currency, by laying such an arrest on the exercise of the latter talent, as that we shall have no currency at all. It must be produced, ere it can be

assayed; and it is possible so to chill and to discourage the productive faculties in our Church, as that its assaying faculty shall have no samples on which to sit in judgment. This will universally be the result in every church where a high-toned contempt for what it holds to be fanaticism is the alone principle by which it is actuated; and where a freezing negative is sure to come forth on all those activities which serve to disturb the attitude of quiescence, into which it has sunk and settled. The leading measures of such a church are all founded on the imagination that the religious tendencies of our nature are so exuberant, as that they need to be kept in check—instead of being, in fact, so dormant as that they need work, and watchfulness, and all that is strenuous, and pains-taking, in the office of an evangelist, for the purpose of being kept alive. The true Christian policy of a church is to avail itself of all the zeal, and all the energy, which are to be found both among its ecclesiastics and its laymen, for the production of a positive effect among our population; and then, should folly or fanaticism come forward along with it, fearlessly to confide the chastening of all this exuberance to the sense, and the scholarship, and the sound intellectual Christianity, for the diffusion of which over the face of our Establishment, the Establishment itself has made a certain amount of provision. Such is our impression of nature's lethargy, and deadness, and unconcern, that we are glad when any thing comes forward,—that we are pleased to behold any symptom of spiritual life or vegetation at all; and so far from being alarmed

by the rumour of a stir, and a sensation, and an enthusiasm, in any quarter of the land, we are ready to hail it as we would the promise of some coming regeneration. A policy the direct opposite of this is often the reigning policy of a church; and, under its blasting operation, spurious and genuine Christianity are alike obliterated; and the work of pulling up the tares is carried on so furiously, that the wheat is pulled up along with it,—the vineyard is rifled of its goodliest blossoms, as well as of its noxious and pestilential weeds; and thus the upshot of the process for extirpating fanaticism may be to turn the fruitful field into a wilderness, and to spread desolation and apathy over all its borders.

A church so actuated does nothing but check the excrescencies of spiritual growth; and may do it so effectually as to reduce to a naked trunk what else might have sent forth its clustering branches, and yielded, in goodly abundance, the fruits of piety and righteousness. There is no positive strength put forth by it, on the side of vegetation, but all on the side of repressing its hated overgrowth. It makes use of only one instrument, and that is the pruning-hook; as if, by its operation alone, all the purposes of husbandry could be served. Its treatment of humanity proceeds on such an excessive fertility of religion in the human heart, that all the toil and strenuousness of ecclesiastics must be given to the object of keeping it down, and so confining it within the limits of moderation; instead of such a natural barrenness that this toil and this strenuousness should rather be given to the various and ever-plying activities of an evangelist, who is instant

in season and out of season. It is thus that the out-field of sectarianism may exhibit a totally different aspect from the inclosed and well kept garden of an Establishment. In the former, there may be a positive and desirable crop, along with the weeds and ranknesses which have been suffered to grow up unchastened; in the latter, there may be nothing that offendeth, save the one deadly offence of a vineyard so cleaned, and purified, and thwarted in all its vegetative tendencies, as to offer, from one end to the other of it, an unvaried expanse of earthliness.

We, therefore, do wrong, in laying such a weight of discouragement on the labourers who produce, and throwing the mantle of our protection and kindness only over the labourers who prune. And what, it may be asked, are the ingredients of mightiest effect, in the character and talent of a productive labourer? They are not his scholarship, and not his critical sagacity of discernment into the obscurities of Scripture, and not his searching or satirical insight among the mysteries of the human constitution. With these he may be helped to estimate the Christianity that has been formed, and to lop off its unseemly excrescencies; but with these alone we never shall positively rear, on the foundation of nature, the edifice itself. This requires another set of qualifications which may or may not exist along with that artificial learning to which, we trust, an adequate homage has been already rendered by us—and qualifications which, whether they are found among endowed or unendowed men, ought to be enlisted on the side of Christianity. They may exist apart from science, and they may most

usefully and productively be exerted apart from science. The possessors of them are abundantly to be found in the private or humble walks of society, and may be the powerful instruments of propagating their own moral and spiritual likeness, among their respective vicinities. We are aware of the jealousy and disdain in which they are regarded by many a churchman,—that, held to be empirics, who invade the province of the regular faculty, there is, it is thought, the same mischief done by them, in theology, which is done by quacks in medicine, as if the diseases of the soul were liable to the same sort of injurious mismanagement, in the hands of the one, as the diseases of the body are, in the hands of the other; and this is very much the feeling of the great majority of our ecclesiastics, whether they look to the efforts of unlettered Methodism in England, or to the Sabbath teaching and the lay itinerancies and the gratuitous zeal of the unofficial and the unordained of our own country.

Now, this parallel between physic and theology does not hold; nor is the power of working a given effect on the corporeal system arrived at by the same steps, with the power of working a given effect on the moral or spiritual system. To be a healing operator upon the body, one must be acquainted with the manifold variety of effects, which the agents and applications innumerable of matter have upon the maladies equally innumerable, to which the body is exposed. To be a healing operator upon the soul, there is one great application revealed to us in Scripture, which, in every instance where it does take effect, acts as an unfailing

specific for all its moral disorders. In the former profession, every addition of knowledge is an addition of power; and the best guarantees for an effectual exercise of the art medical are the science, and study, and experience, of a finished education. In the latter profession, these are useful too, for estimating the effect that has been made upon the character, but not indispensable for working that effect. That mighty truth, the belief of which is the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation, may be deposited by one man in the heart of another, without the aid of any scholastic art, or scholastic preparation. It is too simple to be illustrated by human talent; and the mode of its conveyance from one bosom to another depends on certain influences, which are as much beyond the reach of a philosopher as of a peasant, and as much within the reach of a peasant as of a philosopher. Grant that the one has just as much of personal Christianity, and as much of devotedness in the cause of human souls, and as much of the spirit of believing intercession with God in behalf of those among whom he is labouring,—and then is he in possession of just as powerful instruments as the other, for bringing them under the dominion of the truth as it is in Jesus. So that it is not with bodily as it is with spiritual innoculation. To work the one aright there must be the contact of a right matter with the material subject to which it is applied; and one must study the properties of that which is without them, ere they are qualified to make the application. To work the other aright, there must be the contact of a right mind with the

moral subject to which it is applied; and the possessor of such a mind has simply to put its desires and its tendencies into movement, that the wished for effect may follow; has to act on the impulse of its affections for others; and to pour forth its Christian regards for their welfare; and to gain them over by the exhibition of its worth, and kindness, and piety; and to hold out that Word of life, in which there is nothing dark, but to those who love darkness; and to vent itself in prayer for the saving illumination of those whom it never ceases, so long as hope and prudence warrant the exertion, to ply with its most unwearied activities. To work a moral effect, such as love, on the heart of another —one cannot fail to perceive that mere science, even though it should be the science of our own nature, were utterly unavailing; and that the man who bears this affection in his own heart, would do more to call out a return of it from the heart of his neighbour, than he who, without love himself, has, at the same time, a most intelligent discernment into the law of its operation. And it is the same with a Christian effect. He who can best work it on another's mind is a Christian himself. It is the sympathy of his kindred feelings—it is the observation of his actual faith, and of its bright and beautiful influences upon his own character—it is the winning representation of a doctrine that may be read a thousand times over, without effect, in the written epistles of the New Testament; but which is armed with a new power to engage and soften the heart of an inquirer, when he sees it exemplified in the person of that believer who is a

living epistle of Christ Jesus—it is the melting tenderness by which he presses home the overtures of the gospel on his fellow sinners, and, above all, the efficacy of his prayers for grace to turn and grace to enlighten them; these are what may accomplish a man who is unlettered in all but his Bible, to be a far more efficient Christianiser than the most profound or elaborate theologian; these are what essentially constitute that leaven by which, either with or without philosophy, a fermenting process for the growth and the diffusing of Christianity is made to spread far and wide among our population.

This is the reason why, though ecclesiastics should be accomplished in the whole lore and scholarship of their profession, they should not discourage the effort and activity of lay operatives, in the cause. They may inspect their work, but they should not put a stop to it. When they discover a union of intelligence and piety in an individual, even of humble life, they should patronise his attempts to spread around him the moral and spiritual resemblance of himself. They else may freeze into utter dormancy the best capabilities that are within their reach of Christian usefulness; and thus it is possible for a clergyman, by the weight of his authority, to lay an interdict on a whole host of Christian agency, whom he should have summoned into action, and of whom it is possible that each may be far beneath him in the literature of Christianity, and yet each far before him in the instrumental power of making Christians.

Were the families of a city lane wholly overrun

with the foul spirit of radicalism, it would not be on the services of him who could best dissert on the ethics of patriotism and good citizenship, that I should most build my hopes of reclaiming them. I should look for a far more important and practical reformation, from the simple presence and contiguity among them, of one their equal perhaps in station, and who himself was a sound and a leal-hearted patriot. There would be a weight of influence in the mere exhibition of his wholesome and well-conditioned mind, which no argument however skilful, and no penetration however subtle into the casuistry of public and political virtue, could have power to carry along with them. The living exemplification of a sober, and judicious, and regulated spirit, maintaining its loyalty in the midst of surrounding fury and fermentation, would go farther to calm the tempest than the most ingenious political sermon that was ever framed: and more especially if the individual who so held forth among his neighbours was one in whose friendship they had long trusted, and to whose consistency and good conduct they could all testify. There is no series of lectures delivered in any hall of public resort, that would have half the force which lay in the mere personal communications of such a man with his next-door associates; and what could not have been done by the didactic efforts of any political reasoner, will be far more readily done by the present example and the untaught effusions of him, who simply realised in his own character, the worth and the practical wisdom of a good citizen.

Or, in some other cluster of families, did jeal-

ousy and dislike alienate the heart of each individual from all his fellows, it would not be to him who best understood the mysteries of our moral nature, that I would look, as the likeliest instrument for restoring peace and confidence among them. Through his insight into the *arcana* of the human constitution, he may be able both to perceive and to proclaim, that when there is good-will to others in the bosom of one, this calls forth a reciprocal good-will to him back again. It is not by sermonizing on the operation of this principle, that the wished for effect is carried; it is by actually having the principle, and operating therewith. Or, in other words, the simple presence of a man, humble it may be in rank, but richly endowed either with Christian or with constitutional benevolence,—it is this, unaccompanied with all metaphysical discernment, or the power of metaphysical explanation, that will do more to expel the spirit of rancour from a neighbourhood, and to substitute the spirit of charity in its place, than any theoretical exposition of principles or processes can possibly accomplish. It is not the man who best lectures on the operation of the moving force, but the man who is possessed of the moving force, and actually wields it—it is he who works the practical consequence on the temper and mind of the neighbourhood over which he expatiates. And thus it is that the man of Christian love operates more powerfully as a leaven, in his vicinity, than the man of Christian learning; and it is altogether a mistake, that a long and laborious routine of scholarship must be described, ere the exertions of a religious

teacher shall, with efficacy, tell on the moral and spiritual habit of the disciples who repair to him.

For, it is just in Christianity as in the cases we have now quoted. All the essential truths of it can be easily apprehended; insomuch, that on the ground of mere intelligence with respect to its most vital and important doctrines, the peasant and the philosopher are upon a level. But to apprehend the truth with the natural understanding is one thing; and it is another so to realise and so to appropriate it, as that it shall bear, with power and with personal influence, upon the character. Now, we shall meet with instances of the latter as readily in the humble as in the lofty walks of society; and there shall as soon find an individual who can hold forth a living picture of Christianity, and bring the whole moving force of its affections and its virtues to bear on the vicinity around him. It were bad philosophy, to confine the work of propagating a Christian influence throughout a population to the adepts of a university; and just as strong a transgression against the true philosophy of our nature, to confine it to the regularly bred and ordained clergy, whether of our city or our country parishes. And, however offensive it may be to the official pride and the official intolerance of churchmen, it is not on that account the less true, that, among the very humblest of the flock, individuals may be found, who, with no pretensions to the science of Christianity, yet, from the attractive sympathy that there is in its virtues and in its graces, will form into a more powerful as well as a purer leaven than is the minister himself: insomuch, that the very

best service which he is capable of rendering to the cause may be, to give freedom and encouragement to the working of this leaven, in every part of the mass, where it is known to exist. Perhaps, the deadliest obstacle to the Christianity of his parish is the rancour that he feels towards the zeal and the activity of lay operatives,—the contemptuous resistance, not less unphilosophical than it is unscriptural, with which he is ever bearing down the nascent piety of his neighbourhood, and stifling, in embryo, all those various expedients of Sabbath schools, and fellowship meetings, and assemblages for prayer and religious conversation, wherewith the Christianity of the few might diffuse and multiply its own image over the whole of that parochial territory which is assigned to him.

In every church let securities be provided for the highest attainments of Christian literature, so as that many ecclesiastics shall be found in it, rich in all the deep and varied erudition of theology. We know not a nobler intellectual eminence than that which may be gained on the neglected walks of sound and scriptural philosophy, by one who, with a mind stored both in the criticism and antiquities of his profession, further knows how to impregnate his acquisitions with the liberal and experimental spirit of our age; and who, without commuting the orthodoxy of God's imperishable record, could so far modernize the science, of which he was at the same time both the champion and the ornament, as to involve upon the world, not its new truths, but its new applications. Christianity never changes, but the complexion and habits of

the species are always changing: and thus may there be an exhaustless novelty both of remark and illustration, in our intellectual treatment of a science which touches at almost every point in the nature of man, and bears with decisive effect on the whole frame and economics of civil society. In such a tract of literature as this, study, and speculation, and scholarship, may be carried to the uttermost extent; and he who has done so may well take his place with all that is dignified and great, whether in moral or political philosophy. But it were giving the last finish to the character of his mind, if, amid the pride and the prowess of its rare accomplishments, he could appreciate aright the piety and the practical labours of an unlettered Christian; and it would confer upon him that very thing which is so touching, in the simplicity of Newton, or in the missionary zeal and devotedness of Boyle, if, while surrounded by the trophies of his own successful authorship, he could be made to see, that, however profound in the didactics of Christianity, yet, in the actual work of giving a personal spread to Christianity, there is many a humble man of privacy and of prayer who is far before him.

According to our *beau ideal* of a well going and a well constituted church, there should be among its ecclesiastics the very highest literature of their profession, and among its laymen the most zealous and active concurrence of their personal labours in the cause. The only check upon the occasional eccentricities of the latter should be the enlightened judgment of the former; and this, in every land of freedom and perfect toleration, will be found enough

for the protection of a community against the inroads of a degrading fanaticism. It is utterly wrong, that because zeal breaks forth, at times, into excesses and deviations, there should, therefore, be no zeal; or, because spiritual vegetation has its weeds as well as its blossoms, all vegetation should, therefore be repressed. The wisest thing, we apprehend, for adding to the produce of the Christian vineyard is to put into action all the productive tendencies that may be found in it. The excrescencies which may come forth will wither and disappear, under the eye of an enlightened clergy—so that while, in the first instance, the utmost space and enlargement should be permitted, for the manifold activities of Christian love, upon the one hand; there should be no other defence ever thought of, against the occasional pruriencies that may arise out of this operation, than the mild and pacific, but altogether efficacious corrective of Christian learning, upon the other.

There are two sets of clergy, in every establishment; and it were curious to observe how each of them stands affected to the two questions, whether the ministers of the gospel shall be more richly furnished with Christian literature, and, whether the laymen who are under them shall be permitted to supplement the duties of the clerical office with Christian labour. There is one class of our ecclesiastics, both in England and Scotland, who have a taste for popular agency, and lay enterprises, and the whole apparatus of religious schools and religious societies, which are so multiplying around us, in this busy age of philanthropic acti-

vity and adventure. Now, what we would ask of such ecclesiastics is, whether they would feel a relish or repugnance towards those measures, the effect of which is to exalt the clergy of the church to a higher pre-eminence than they even now occupy, for all the accomplishments of sacred literature? Will they come forward and say that they are afraid of literature?—that a clergy too enlightened would not suit them?—that, loving to breathe in the muddy atmosphere of popular ignorance and popular folly, they want no science and no scholarship, whose hateful beams might disperse the congenial vapours wherewith the effervescence of plebeianism has filled and overspread the whole scene of their ignoble labours? Do they tremble, lest the light of philosophy should penetrate into the dark unknown of their own inglorious sculking places? And are they really conscious, after all, that what they have headed and patronised is a low paltry drivelling fanaticism, which would shrink before the full gaze of a lettered and intellectual church, where every minister were a luminary of science as well as a luminary of the gospel? These are the degrading imputations they will bring upon themselves, by any resistance they shall make to the learning of the clergy: and such a resistance, if offered, is the very thing that will propagate the timely alarm to another quarter, and will cause, we trust, the friends of learning to rally, and to form into strength elsewhere. Those ministers who, whether under the name of the high church, or of the moderate, or of the rational party, feel a strong disrelish towards the active interference of

laymen in the work of religious instruction, will know how to act should they perceive, in the party of their antagonists, an equally strong disrelish towards any measure that goes to augment the professional literature of all our future ecclesiastics. They cannot be blind to the fact, that, at this moment, there is a fermentation, and a brooding activity, and an unexampled restlessness, and a busy movement of schemes and of operations, before unknown in the walks of popular Christianity; and if, additional to all this, they should further see a dread, on the part of zealous champions and overseers, lest the lamp of Christian literature should be lighted up into greater brilliancy than before, we trust that this will be felt and understood by those who nauseate what they term the missionary and methodistical spirit of our age, as the intimation of what they ought to do. It is not by putting forth the arm of intolerance, that they will reach it its exterminating blow. It is not by fulminating edicts that they will smother it. It is not by raising and strengthening all the mounds of exclusion, that they will be able to guard our Establishment against what they deem, and honestly deem, to be the inroads of a pestilence. These are not the legitimate defences of our Church against hateful fanaticism: and they who have set themselves in array against this hydra, whether she be indeed a reality or only a bugbear of their own imagination, can do nothing better than to rear a literary and enlightened priesthood, under the eye of whose vigilance all that is truly noxious and evil will be most effectually disarmed also.

But should the friends of this so called fanaticism among the clergy be also the friends and not the enemies, of scientific and theological accomplishment in their own order; should they dare their antagonists to the open arena of light and of liberty; should their demand be that the torch of learning shall be blown into a clearer and intenser flame, and be brought to shine upon all their opinions and all their ways; should the cry which they send forth be for more of erudition, and more of philosophy, and that not one single labourer shall be admitted to the ministerial field, till our universities, those established luminaries of our land, have shed upon his understanding a larger supply of that pure, and chaste, and academic light, the property of which is to guide, and not to bewilder, to clarify the eye of the mind, and not to dazzle it to the overpowering of all its faculties;—if this be the beseeching voice of fanaticism, and it be left to pass unregarded away, then shall the enemies of fanaticism have become the enemies of knowledge; and our Church, instead of exhibiting the aspect of zeal tempered by wisdom, and of a warm active busy spirit of Christian philanthropy, under the control and guardianship of accomplished and well educated clergymen, may, at length, desolated of all its pieties, be turned into a heartless scene of secularity, and coarseness, and contempt for vital religion, where the sacredness of Christianity has fled, and left not behind it one redeeming quality in the science of Christianity among its officiating ministers; and, alike abandoned by the light of the Divine Spirit and the light of human philosophy,

it will offer the spectacle of a dreary and extended waste, without one spot of loveliness or verdure which the eye can delight to rest upon.*

But, it is now time to enter on the more familiar objections which have been alleged against Sabbath schools: and there is none which floats so currently, or is received with greater welcome and indulgence, than that they bear with adverse and malignant influence, on family religion,—that they detach our young from the natural guardianship of their own family; and come in place of that far better and more beautiful system which, at one time, obtained over the whole Lowlands of Scotland,—when almost every father was, at the same time, the Sabbath teacher of his own offspring; when the simple voice of psalms was heard to ascend from our streets and our cottages, and the

We have been insensibly led to some of the above remarks, by the circumstance of a measure being now in progress, for augmenting the academic preparations of our students, ere they shall be admissible to the ministerial office in Scotland. There can be no doubt as to the fact of a very wide diversity of sentiment between two bodies of clergy, about the expediency of enlisting, as subsidiary teachers, laymen who have not had the advantage of a university education. We think, on the one hand, that, without such education, there is many a private Christian, who might thus be most usefully and most effectively employed; but, on the other hand, we would have this education rendered far more complete, and perfect among the regular teachers of the Establishment. And we therefore conceive that the measure in question should have friends and zealous supporters from both sides of the Church. They who see ground for fear, lest, in the novel institutions of Sabbath teaching, and lay agency, the Church shall be trodden under foot by a sort of fanatical usurpation, should wish for a more accomplished clergy, as the most effectual barrier against this mischief. And it is for the credit of those again who patronise such institutions, to manifest their utter fearlessness of light and learning; but rather to court its approaches, and prove, by their doing so, that they regarded their own practice as accordant with the doctrines of revelation, and the sound philosophy of our nature.

evening of God's hallowed day was consecrated, in many a mansion of domestic piety, to those holy exercises which assembled the children of each household around their venerable sires, and transmitted the Christian worth and wisdom of the former to its succeeding generation. It is some such picture as this which kindles the indignation of many a sentimentalist against the institutions that we are pleading for; and they have to combat not merely the unconcern and enmity which obtain with the many, towards all schemes of Christian philanthropy whatever, but also the generous emotions, and even the pious recollections, of a few men, who are disposed, at least, to give the question a respectful entertainment.

Now, it ought to be remembered, that to come in place of a better system is one thing, and to displace that system is another. Is it possible for any man, at all acquainted with the chronology of Sabbath schools, to affirm that they are the instruments of having overthrown the family religion of Scotland? Have they operated as so many ruthless invaders, on what, at the time of their entrance, was a beauteous moral domain, and swept away from it all that was affecting or graceful in the observations of our forefathers? Whether did they desolate the territory, or have they only made their lodgment on what was already a scene of desolation? The truth is, that for many years previous to the extension of this system, a woful degeneracy was going on in the religious habit and character of our country;—that, from the wanton outrages inflicted by unrelenting patronage on the

taste and demand of parishes, the religious spirit, one so characteristic of our nation, has long been rapidly subsiding—that, more particularly in our great towns, the population have so outgrown the old ecclesiastical system, as to have accumulated there into so many masses of practical heathenism: —and now the state of the alternative is not, whether the rising generation shall be trained to Christianity in schools, or trained to it under the roof of their fathers; but whether they shall be trained to it in schools, or not trained to it at all. It is whether a process of deterioration, which originated more than half a century ago, and has been rapid and resistless in its various tendencies ever since—whether it shall be suffered to carry our people still more downward in the scale of moral blindness and depravity; or whether the only remaining expedient for arresting it shall be put into operation. Were it as easy a task to prevail on an irreligious parent to set up the worship and the instruction of religion, in his family, as to get his consent, and prevail upon his children, to attend the ministrations of a Sabbath school, there might then be some appearance of room for all the obloquy that has been cast upon these institutions. But as the matter stands, in many a city and in many a parish, the Christian philanthropist is shut up to an effort upon the young, as his last chance for the moral regeneration of our country. In despair (and it is a despair warranted by all experience) of operating, with extensive effect, on the confirmed habit and obstinacy of manhood, he arrests the human plant, at an earlier

and more susceptible stage, and puts forth the only hand that ever would have offered for the culture and the training of this young immortal. In the great majority of instances, he does not withdraw his pupils, for a single moment, from any Christian influence that would have descended upon them in another quarter, but showers upon their heads and their hearts the only Christian influence they ever are exposed to. He is, in fact, building up again that very system, with the destruction of which he has been charged; and rearing many young, who, but for him, would have been the still more corrupt descendants of a corrupt parentage, to be the religious guides and examples of a future generation.

It is not true that family religion is superseded by these schools, so as to make Christianity less the topic of mutual exercise and conversation between parents and children, than before the period of their institution. Instead of banishing this topic from families, they have been known, in very many instances, to have first introduced it into dwelling-places where before it was utterly unknown. The most careless of parents are found to give their ready and delighted consent to the proposal which comes to them from the Sabbath teacher, for the attendance of their children. And the children, instead of carrying off from their own houses an ingredient of worth which truly had no place in them, do, in fact, import that very ingredient from the seminaries which have been branded as the great absorbents of all the family religion in the land. Parents, in spite of themselves, feel an interest in that which interests and occupies their

children; and through the medium of natural affection have their thoughts been caught to the subject of Christianity; and the very tasks and exercises of their children have brought a theme to their evening circle, upon which, aforetimes, not a syllable of utterance was ever heard; and still more, when a small and select library is attached to the institution, has it been the mean of circulating, through many a household privacy, such wisdom and such piety as were indeed new visitants upon a scene, till now untouched by any print or footstep of sacredness.

We have one prophecy in the Bible, that many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. It was thus at the outset of Christianity, when apostles itinerated from one country to another; it is thus still with missionaries who go abroad; and it is also thus, though in a greatly more limited degree, with Sabbath teachers, who go forth on the errand of Christianising—each stepping beyond his own threshold, and travelling his benevolent round among other families. In the natural progress of things, the locomotive operation will gradually contract itself within narrower boundaries. Christianity, by a more extended set of movements, will first be established, in a general way throughout all lands. Then, by a busy internal process among towns and parishes, will there be a filling up of each larger territory. The local system of Sabbath schools may be regarded as a step, in this transition, from a more widely diffusive to a more intense and contracted style of operation. So far from superseding the household system of educa-

tion, its direct consequence is to establish that system in places where it was before unknown; or to restore in it places, where, through the decay of Christianity, for one or more generations, it had, for some time, been suspended. We shall not affirm, at present, whether it is destined to continue a wholesome institution, to the end of time; or, whether, like the general enterprise of missionaries, it too may come to be dispensed with, having served its own important but temporary purpose of conducting the world onward to that state, for the arrival of which we have another prophecy of the Bible, when "they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, 'know the Lord;' for all shall know him, from the least to the greatest."

Meanwhile, we not only see that the Sabbath school system tends directly to the establishment of the household system of education; but that, even in those families where the latter is in full operation, the former does not interfere with it. There are many who concede the advantage of Sabbath schools, in those cases where the parents are neither able nor willing to teach their children; but who regard them as a bane and a nuisance, when they come into contact with our religious and well ordered families. In this state of opinion, it is impossible to conduct a Sabbath school, without a feeling of very awkward embarrassment, on the part both of the teacher and of the people among whom he expatiates. No children can be admitted, without a severe reflection against their parents being implied by it; and if such be the prevalent

style of sentiment respecting these institutions, no parent will consent to send his children, without feeling, that by this step, he brings down upon his own character and respectability the heaviest of all imputations. For our own parts, we feel ourselves to be clear of this embarrassment altogether. We would make no distinction in the invitation that we offered to families for their attendance on our schools, between religious and irreligious parents. In large towns, where the church accommodation is still in such wretched scantiness, we know that, with respect to the great majority of children, such a school affords the only opportunity they have, through the day, for meeting in a place of public worship or instruction,—and that attendance upon it would no more interfere with household exercises, than does attendance upon the ministrations of a regular clergyman, in a well provided country parish. This argument for the sufficiency and the superiority of family instruction would apply, with as great force, against the attendance of children on a church, as against their attendance on a Sabbath school, in all those cases where there is no church open to receive them. The truth is, that these schools afford the only supplement we can at present command, in a large town, for the defects of its ecclesiastical system. They come in place of the churches yet to be provided, and the existing number of which we have already demonstrated to be so fearfully short of the needs of the population. Nor does the time in which a Sabbath school keeps its children detached and at a distance from their natural guides and protectors,

exceed the time at which, under a better economy, these same children would be sitting, from under the parental roof, in a chapel, or meeting-house.

But, even granting the case of parents altogether religious, and granting them to be fully observant of all the ordinances, and that, in particular, their well-filled family pew holds out, Sabbath after Sabbath, the pleasing aspect of a well-conditioned and a well-disciplined household; still we do not hold a Sabbath school for the children of such parents to be at all hurtful, or even superfluous. There is time both for the household and the school exercises, during the currency of a Sabbath evening, consisting at the very least, of four hours; and it is, on many accounts, better that this time should be so partitioned, than that it should all be spent by the children, in what they are apt to feel the weary imprisonment of their own dwelling places. It is well that there should be such a variety to keep up and enliven their attention, among religious topics. It is well that the parent should guide their preparations for the teacher; and that a judicious teacher should lead on the parent to a right track of exercise and examination, for the children. There is time, under such a system, both for the lessons and the prayers of the family; and it is further right that there should be time for the heads of the family to have their own hours of deeper sacredness, not to be interrupted even by the religious care of those who have sprung from them. The seminaries we plead for, instead of having any effect to mar, do, in fact, harmonise, at all points, with the spiritual complexion of our

most decent and devoted families. Nor can we conceive any degree of piety, or Christian wisdom, on the part of parents, that should lead them to regard a well-conducted Sabbath school in any other light than as a blessing and an acquisition to their children.

And here it may be remarked of a local school, that it possesses a peculiar advantage over a general school, in the attraction which it holds out to all sorts of families. It lies either within its own little district, or in its immediate vicinity; and, separated only by a few houses from each dwelling-place, the whole line of distance which is described by each of the scholars from his home, can, both in going and returning, be easily followed or overseen by his parents. Thus will there be no corruption to meet him on his path, and no possibility, between the parent and the teacher, to evade the attendance of a single evening, on any excursion of vice or idleness. The shield and the security of domestic guardianship are thus thrown over the system; and even the children of the religious and irreligious mingle together only under the eye of their teacher, and may be separated instantaneously at the breaking up of the juvenile congregation. They mix only at the season when the example and proficiency of the good have a predominating influence over the depraved and the careless; and passing, in a single moment, from the eye of the teacher to the eye of the parent, there is no time for the influence of the depraved to assume its natural ascendancy. Through a Sabbath school, as through a conduit, the spirit

and character of the better families may send a moralising influence upon the others; while, in their passage to and from the schools, all the guards of parental jealousy might be put forth, to intercept the stream that else might flow in an opposite direction. It is thus that the presence and the exertions of a Sabbath teacher may bring about just such a composition of the families as to give scope for the assimilating power of every good ingredient, and, at the same time, to check the assimilating power of every bad one. He may hasten inconceivably the fermentation of that leaven, by the working of which it is that we are taught to expect at length, the spread of Christianity throughout the whole population. Nor are we aware of a single office, within the regular limits of any ecclesiastical constitution, from the pious and faithful discharge of whose duties so signal a blessing may be anticipated, both for the present and for future generations.

We are glad, however, that so much has been said, in Scotland, about the invasion of the Sabbath school system on family religion. It will have a salutary re-action both on teacher and parents, and make all who are religiously disposed be careful, lest so interesting a vestige of the Christianity of other days should be any further defaced or trampled upon, by an institution the design of which is to restore our population to all that was pious, and venerable, and affecting, in the style and habit of the olden time. And there is one thing that may be said to those who urge this objection most vehemently. In so doing they give up the prin-

ciple of the former objection. By admitting the competency of parents to teach Christianity to their children, they admit, that part of this work, at least, may be confided to other hands than those of regular and ordained clergy. They admit that a father, in humble life, may be the instrument of transmitting Christian wisdom and Christian worth to his own children,—and that though it were quackery for each parent to undertake the cure of family diseases, it is not quackery for each to undertake the work of family instruction. Thus the comparison between the efforts of the unlicenced in theology and medicine is, by them at least, practically given up. We hold this to be a signal testimony, and from the mouths of adversaries too, to the power of unlettered Christianity, in propagating its own likeness, throughout the young of our rising generation,—a power which most assuredly would not all go into dissipation, though, for a short time every Sabbath evening, it were transported from its place in the family to a new place in such a seminary of religious instruction as we have attempted to advocate.

And there is one point of superiority which a Sabbath teacher, humble in circumstances, has over one who is much and visibly raised above the level of the families among whom he labours. It is true that the latter has an advantage, in the mere ascendancy of rank, and in that peculiar homage which the very exhibition of piety, when conjoined with affluence, is ever sure to draw from the multitude. But the former has his compensation in the more unmixed influence, of his ministrations.

His presence awakens no sordid or mercenary expectation among the poor. The welcome he gets from them is altogether disinterested; and, as we have already attempted to evince, in the proportion that the acceptance of a religious visit is untainted in respect of its character, is the visit itself unimpaired in respect of its practical efficacy. To us the purity of the ministration appears indispensable to the power of it; and it is to him who is the bearer of Christianity and nothing else, among the habitations of the common people, that we would look for the most ready and rapid diffusion of its principles. This is a circumstance which goes far to counteract any loss that may be conceived to arise from the defect of a more regular or refined scholarship. Let there be sincere piety united with plain but good intelligence; and we would have no scruple, but the contrary, in employing, as Sabbath teachers, men from the very humblest classes of life. The weight of an exalted character will ever carry it over the want of an exalted condition; and it is, indeed, a striking testimony to the worth and importance of the poor, that among them the best capabilities are to be found for transforming a corrupt into a pure and virtuous community.

This holds out a very brilliant moral perspective to the eye of a philanthropist. In a few years, many of the scholars at our present seminaries will be convertible into the teachers of a future generation. There will be indefinite additions made to our religious agency. Instead of having to assail, as now, the general bulk of the population, by a

Christian influence from without—the mass itself will be penetrated, and, through the means of residing and most effective teachers, there will be kept up a busy process of internal circulation. It is thus that he who can patiently work at small things, and be content to wait for great things, lends by far the best contribution to the mighty achievement of regenerating our land. Extremes meet; and the sanguine philanthropist, who is goaded on by his impatience to try all things, and look for some great and immediate result, will soon be plunged into the despair of ever being able to do any thing at all. The man who can calmly set himself down to the work of a district school, and there be satisfied to live and to labour without a name, may germinate a moral influence that will, at length, overspread the whole city of his habitation. It is rash to affirm of the local system that it is totally impracticable in London; while most natural, at the same time, that it should appear so to those who think nothing worthy of an attempt, unless it can be done *per saltum*,—unless it at once fills the eye with the glare of magnificence, and it can be invested, at the very outset, with all the pomp and patronage of extensive committeeship. A single lane, or court, in London, is surely not more impracticable than in other towns of this empire. There is one man to be found there, who can assume it as his locality, and acquit himself thoroughly and well of the duties which it lays upon him. There is another who can pitch beside him, on a contiguous settlement; and, without feeling bound to speculate for the whole metropolis, can pervade, and do

much to purify his assumed portion of it. There is a third who will find that a walk so unnoticed and obscure is the best suited to his modesty; and a fourth, who will be eager to reap, on the same field, that reward of kind and simple gratitude, in which his heart is most fitted to rejoice. We are sure that this piece-meal operation will not stop for want of labourers,—though it may be arrested, for a while, through the eye of labourers being seduced by the meteoric glare of other enterprises, alike impotent and imposing. So long as each man of mediocrity conceives himself to be a man of might, and sighs after some scene of enlargement, that may be adequate to his fancied powers, little or nothing will be done; but so soon as the sweeping and sublime imagination is dissipated, and he can stoop to the drudgery of his small allotment in the field of usefulness, then will it be found, how it is by the summation of many humble mediocrities, that a mighty result is at length arrived at. It was by successive strokes of the pickaxe and the chissel that the pyramids of Egypt were reared; and great must be the company of workmen, and limited the task which each must occupy, ere there will be made to ascend the edifice of a nation's worth, or of a nation's true greatness.

In this laborious process of nursing an empire to Christianity, we know not, at present, a readier or more available apparatus of means than that which has been raised by Methodism. In every large town of England, it owns a number of disciples; and, through a skilful mechanism that has been long in operation, there is a minute acquaint-

ance, on the part of their leaders, with the talents and character of each of them. Why should not they avail themselves of their existing facilities for the adoption of this system; and so thoroughly pervade that population by their Sabbath schools, which they only, as yet, have partially drawn to their pulpits? It would be doing more, in the long run, to renovate and multiply the chapels of Methodism, than all that has yet been devised by them; and thus might they both extend religious education among the young, and a church-going habit throughout the general population. We doubt not that, with this new style of tactics, they would mightily alarm the Establishment. But so much the better. This is just the salutary application which the Establishment stands in need of. And, from all that we have learned of the catholic and liberal spirit of this class of dissenters, we guess that, though they did no more than simply stimulate the Church of England to do the whole work, and to do it aright, they would bless God and rejoice.

Such is the good-will we bear to sectarians, that we should rejoice in nothing more than to behold their instantaneous adoption of an expedient which, we honestly believe, would add tenfold to their resources and their influence. Let them operate in large towns, on the principle of locality. Let them enter on the territorial possession of this peopled wilderness. Let them erect as many district schools and district chapels as they find that they have room for; and if the Establishment will not be roused by this manifold activity, out of its lethargies, then sectarianism will, at length, earn, and most right-

fully earn, all the honours and all the ascendancy of an Establishment. It is, indeed, a most likely thing that the Church would be put into motion; and this, of itself, were an important good rendered to the country, by the industry and zeal of dissenters. But when we look to the fearful deficiency of our ecclesiastical system, there is no fear lest all the galley-boats of sectarianism, with the slow and ponderous Establishment in tow, will too soon overtake the mighty extent of our yet unprovided population. Nor do we know of any common enterprise that would promise fairer, at length, for embodying the Church and the dissenters together, by some such act of comprehensive union, as has lately reflected so much honour on the two most numerous classes of dissenters in our country.

CHAPTER IX.

On the Relation that subsists between the Christian and the Civic Economy of Large Towns.

Before proceeding farther, it may be useful to offer a short summary of the principles which have already been expounded about a right ecclesiastical system for great towns; and then to elucidate the bearing which a good Christian, has upon a good civic, economy—discriminating, at the same time, between the peculiarities which appertain to each of them.

There is a sure experimental alliance between

the defect of Christianity among a people, and the defect of certain human arrangements that conduce to its growth and preservation;—and one most palpable defect of the latter sort is, that the population of cities have been permitted so far to outgrow the means of their religious instruction. There are many towns in our empire, where the Establishment has not provided room in churches for one tenth of the inhabitants; and the inhabitants, when thus left to seek out Christianity for themselves, have shown how feeble the native demand of the human mind for it is, by their not supplementing, with chapels and meeting-houses, beyond another tenth, this enormous deficiency of the Establishment. It is clear, in these circumstances, that the vast majority must be left to wander without the pale of Christian ministrations, and Christian ordinances, altogether—where they have settled down into a mass of heathenism, which, to the eye of common experience, looks completely irrecoverable. There is a very general feeling of helplessness and despair upon this subject, as if the profligacy and ungodliness of cities were elements in every way as unconquerable as is physical necessity itself; and thus it is, that any serious or sustained attempt to make head against this sore mischief, is ranked, by many an incredulous observer, with the Quixotism that goeth forth, on some region of wild adventure, to reclaim a hydra, that scarcely admits of being softened, and will certainly never be subdued.

To make the recovery in question still more hopeless, there is no denying of the fact, that were

churches to be built at this moment, up to the full accommodation of all our city families, it would have almost no perceptible influence on the habit into which they have degenerated. It is not at the sound of a bell, that they will consent to relinquish the sordid or profane gratifications wherewith they fill up that day of rest, which they have turned into a day of rioting and lawless indulgence. New churches might be built; and, if well appointed, new churches might be filled, but rather by a transference of sitters from the old churches, than by any large or extensive drafts on a still unmoved population. So that this one expedient which has been so much talked of, and to which even the eye of national wisdom has lately been directed, may, in itself, be utterly powerless, as to the object of making any sensible advances on the heathenism of our people,—all serving to confirm the general hopelessness that there is upon the subject, and to afford a plausible warrant for the contempt wherewith schemes of philanthropy are so apt to be regarded by the more secular and sober minded of our citizens, who feel satisfied with things as they are; nor want their quiescence to be at all disturbed by any suggestion or demonstration, whatever, of things as they should be.

This sluggishness of the population, in respect to Christianity, has led us to advert to the difference, in point of effect, between their being left to seek it for themselves, and their being aggressively plied with the offer of its ministrations and its lessons. It is a difference which we conceive to be well exemplified by the advantages which a local,

has over a general Sabbath school. The teacher of a general Sabbath school draws to him those pupils, chiefly, whose parents have a predisposition for the instructions of the gospel; and so, may he be instrumental in perpetuating Christianity where it is, but not in reviving it where it is not. The teacher of a local Sabbath school, on the other hand, feels himself charged with all the families that are to be found on the face of his assigned territory; and, by the mere force of moral suasion, does he find himself able to compel nearly all the children to come in: and thus, instead of a mere process of attraction, which ever operates only on minds already possessed of some kindred quality to religion, does he set up an active process of emanation, whereby he operates on minds that are indifferent, or even hostile to the cause; and the cheering experience is, that under this local system, the attendance of the young is more than tripled beyond what it was under the general system,—thus pointing out the way in which a population might have been preserved from degeneracy, had it been adopted sooner; and the way in which, if adopted now, a population might still be recalled from it.

For, what is true of Sabbath schools for the young, is also true of churches for the whole population. Let a church draw its sitters from the city at large; and it is by the feeble process of attraction, and by this alone, that it secures their attendance. A minister cannot charge himself with so wide a field of superintendance as the whole city. He cannot take cognizance of all its families,

or pay such week-day attentions to them as might induce their Sabbath-day attendance upon himself. Meanwhile, the population increases, and outgrows the room that there is in churches for their accommodation; and many are the families that fall without the reach of all ministerial cognizance whatever, and who without the habit of church-going, are also without the taste for it: and thus, it is not only true that the number of places of worship is greatly beneath the necessities of the people, but the demand of the people themselves, for new places, is also greatly beneath these necessities;—so, that if by a sudden movement of patriotism, many new churches were speedily made to arise to the view of the citizens, the mortifying result were, that the citizens, still unmoved out of their long acquired and firm habits of non-attendance, would leave the churches to stand unoccupied, and so stamp the charge of temerity and impotence on the whole speculation.

It is on this account that we hold it indispensable, for the restoration of a Christian habit in our cities, to give to churches the benefit of the same principle of locality, that has been found so signally efficacious in bringing Sabbath schools into contact with the whole population. Every church in the Establishment should be as exclusively connected with its parish, as a local Sabbath school is with its assigned territory. The week-day attentions of the minister, instead of being generalised over the whole city, in which case they are sure to be languid, and heartless, and ineffective, should be as much concentrated, and as frequently reiter-

ated as possible, in the smaller and more manageable district, over which he has hitherto had little more than a bare nominal superintendance. Were he permitted to recruit his church from his parish, as far as his parish might be disposed to furnish him with hearers, this would soon translate him into a far more intimate and endearing relationship with its families, than by all his other attempts he could possibly attain. The circumstance of having a thousand hearers in his parish, instead of a hundred, would give him a weight and an ascendancy convertible to the best Christian, and collaterally bringing along with it the best civil and economical purposes that ever were contemplated by the eye of patriotism. All the bland, and kindly, and civilising influences of a parochial system could thus be brought into play among the dark and crowded recesses of a city. And little is it known, how much the cruel disruption of the minister from his parish, by a system of seat-letting that ought instantly to be abandoned, has contributed to that degeneracy which looks at present so hopeless and irrecoverable.

But, there is a way of acting, upon this suggestion, which must be attended to. The substitution of a local, for a general congregation, should not be attempted by an instantaneous dismissal of all the extra-parochial sitters, and the offer of their vacant room to the inhabitants of the parish where the church is situated. This, independently of its being an act of violence to individual feeling, were an act of impolicy, even for the purpose that is meant to be accomplished by it. The strong ex-

isting habit of alienation from all ordinances, on the part of those who have long lived in ease and comfort without them, must be adverted to: and, such in fact is the inveteracy of this habit, that, were a thousand sittings vacated in the church of one of our plebeian parishes, for the sake of extensively accommodating the parishioners, it is likely that not more than a hundred of these sittings might be inquired after. It is not enough that room be provided—the renovation of a new habit must be brought about; and, it were positively throwing away the accommodation that we have, if pews were emptied for the people, faster than the people come forward with their demand for the pews. This points to the conclusion, that a parochial, can only come in the place of a general attendance, not by an immediate, but by a gradual substitution of the one for the other. And there is no law of graduality that seems better adapted for the purpose, than simply to hold forth, to the preference of parishioners, all those vacancies which are created by the death or the removal of present occupiers. There is no offence given to any actual sitter by such an arrangement; and the vacancies which, in a congregation of fifteen hundred, will not take place at above the rate of a hundred in the year, will not exceed the rate at which the demand for them may be stimulated, by the ordinary labours and attentions of any city minister, in the parish which has been assigned to him; and every new seat-letting extends his interest in his own local territory, by adding to the number of his Sabbath hearers who reside within its bounds; and thus the ties of reci-

procity between him and his people, are every day becoming closer—till at length, but for the extent of his population, the relationship would be as affectionate on his part, and as cordial on theirs, as is that which obtains between the worthy minister, and the simple natives of a parish in the country. This is a consummation which never can be reached, under the present system of seat-letting; and it were vain to attempt the speeding of it forward by any sudden or desultory shift in the distribution of the sitters,—although we have no doubt that, by the method now recommended, (while nothing striking or visible could be produced in a single year), the whole effect would be surely and quietly realised in less than the space of a single generation.

The power which a local Sabbath school teacher has, in virtue of that peculiar arrangement under which he operates, to draw out a full attendance, of the juvenile popualtion of his district, on that seminary over which he presides, is the very power that, under the same arrangement, might be exercised by the minister of a city parish. Not that he would suddenly call forth the attendance of his whole population on the church where he preaches,—for he has the habits of manhood and of established life to contend against,—but that he would do it gradually and surely. Let his people be only aware of their right of preference for the vacant sittings of their own church; and he will find his progressive, but certain way to the desirable result of a Sabbath audience, the great bulk of whom are composed of the residenters upon his own territorial vineyard. He has it so much in his power, within the limited district of

a parish, to make himself the object of recognition among its families. He can so easily, by his week-day attentions, obtrude himself and the business of his profession upon their notice. He can so naturally become the object of their Sunday preference, by becoming the object of their gratitude for his practicable labours among the young, and the sick, and the dying. He can withal, by the institution of a good Sabbath school system, so readily fill up the vacancies in his congregation out of its seminaries, by the very likely transition that would take place among the youth on the borders of manhood —when, after leaving the schools that he had provided, so many of them would most naturally find their way to the church in which he preached. It is thus, that, as the fruit of his concentrated attentions through the week, on a parish, the minister might recruit and sustain the attendance, with a facility which can never be experienced by him whose loose and general relationship to the whole city leaves him no other chance for a congregation, than the unfostered demand of people who are in a great measure beyond his reach, and with whom he can never come into close and recurring contact in the way of household ministrations.

We are the more earnest upon this point, because we are aware of no other method by which a demand can be excited for additional churches, at all commensurate to the moral and religious necessities of our population. Under the present system, there may, by the mere increase of people, be such an increase of the demand, in our second rate towns, as shall ensure the addition of one or

two churches in half a century, or in such a period of time as may have witnessed the accession of as many families as could fill a dozen of churches. And thus it is, that profligacy and profanation so rapidly outstride all the counteractions which have been raised against them; and which, however it may have escaped observation hitherto, have in truth lost their efficacy, by the utter neglect of the principle of locality, as applied to the churches and parishes of a city. It may only be by the countenance and good-will of magistrates, that the indispensable article of churches, for the accommodation of the people, can be provided. But it is only by the assiduity of ministers, with all the advantages for local and parochial cultivation upon their side, that the no less indispensable article can be provided, of a demand, on the part of the people, for this accommodation. Give to such a minister the power of meeting this demand with vacancies as they occur. Let him be able to satisfy the inquiries of his people, by the assurance of disposable room for them, and for them only, at the next term of seat-letting. Save both him and them from the discouragement of beholding that room taken possession of, through the partiality of city administrators, by interlopers from without; and then, by very ordinary exertion indeed, under this amended system, could the demand of the people be so excited, as not merely to fill, but to press on the existing accommodation. In this way too, the demand would clearly announce itself—and, from the intenseness of the competition for places, could there be gathered the distinct and satisfying

intimation, when it was that new erections might safely be adventured on—and, greatly beyond the power of accommodation in his own church, might each minister create occupiers for future churches, whose united voice would clearly indicate the time for old parishes being divided, and new ones formed out of shares and detachments from contiguous parishes.

We fear that without this expedient, the increase of churches will follow tardily and sluggishly in the rear of a far more rapidly increasing population; and, that thus, from one year to another, there will be a decay of proportional means for the arresting of vice and profligacy in our land. It is not, as we have often averred, with Christian instruction for the supply of our spiritual wants, as it is with any given commodity for the supply of our bodily wants. In the latter case, there is no strenuousness required to call forth a demand: so, that upon the simple offer of the commodity, we may be sure, that it will be as much sought for, and as much used, as is good for the interest of our species. But the case is widely different with the lessons of Christianity. To raise a demand for them, is a work of as great or greater difficulty than it is to provide the supply of them. And, it is only by the clergy of the Establishment, each keeping up an intensely parochial operation within his own sphere, instead of dissipating his influence over the wide superficies of a whole city—it is only thus, we apprehend, that much more of Sabbath accommodation will come to be provided, because it is only thus that much more of it will come to be either called or cared for.

The mode of parochial seat-letting, as now laid down, we regard as by far the most important suggestion that can be offered to our city administrators, for the purpose of forwarding a right Christian economy in our great towns; and we shall deem their compliance with it to be the very best contribution which they could render to the cause. And yet, we speak the language both of apprehension and experience, when we profess ourselves to be not very sanguine, either of their speedy adoption of this mode, or of their faithful and persevering execution of it. It requires a force, of no ordinary momentum, to shift the routine of municipal business; and no where is there more devout homage rendered to the omnipotence of custom, than in the office of city clerks or city chamberlains; and there, as in a secure and impregnable fastness, will she continue to hold her imperial sway—alike regardless of promises that are not remembered, and of principles that are not understood. It is not, that in the required line of proceeding there is at all any difficulty: for nothing more patent, we should think, than simply, in the disposal of vacant places, to grant a preference to parochial, over extra-parochial applications. And were any thing like a striking or visible result to come *soon enough* out of this arrangement, we should not despair of a more ready compliance with it. Could the final benefit be so placed before the immediate eye of our civic practitioners, as to force itself upon their observation, it is likely enough that, on their part, there would be a more punctual adherence to this great law of parochial equity.

But the operation of the law is so gradual—and, when bidden to look through the vista of half a generation, for the full and salutary effect, it then appears to be so much a matter of speculation, and so little a matter of sense, that any argument which can be addressed upon the subject has but a feeble influence, when it has the mighty power of old use and old authority to contend against. It is thus, we fear, that with all those advantages of the principle of locality, which an Establishment naturally possesses—it may be long ere in towns, she shall come completely to realise them; and, meanwhile, that the unordained or dissenting teachers of religion may, by the assumption of what is tantamount to parishes for themselves, earn that superiority of usefulness which our regular clergy, while the existing methods are perpetuated, will vainly and hopelessly aspire after.

Should one hundred applications from the families of a poor city parish, for seats in their own parish church, come into competition with a hundred applications from families in the wealthier and more fashionable side of the town, we know not in what terms to brand or to depreciate the impolicy that would set aside the former, and give preference and acceptancy to the latter. Such a forthcoming for seats, on the part of our operative population, were just the commencement of a process, which, of all others, it were most desirable to help and to encourage forward: nor can we conceive an object on which either serious principle or enlightened patriotism ought to be more intently set, than that of opening and multiplying all possible

facilities for this best of all popular movements. The intelligence of the first year's success would call forth a host of expectancy from neighbours, for the vacancies of the second year; and thus would the matter make progress, so as that with the infection of a new taste, there should be the spread of a new habit, in that very quarter of society which is now so wofully overrun both with political rancour, and with personal worthlessness. The appearance of a parochial demand for seats, from artisans and labourers, is just that initial tendency to what is good which ought to be hailed with delight, and met with the readiest alacrity, by all who have any presiding influence in the management of our public affairs. And when, instead of this, the tendency is discouraged, and driven back again to the dormancy out of which it had arisen—when the hand that ought to have fostered this approximation inflicts upon it the check of a mortifying repulse, made as offensive as possible, by the preference of a rich man who is out of the parish, to a poor man who is in it—when, disheartened by repeated failures, the attempt is no longer made, because the galling experience of this sordid and ungenerous partiality has at length convinced parishioners that the attempt is altogether hopeless, —The conclusion is, that philanthropy may often be thwarted in her likeliest designs, not because of the natural impediments which lie in her way, but because her best and dearest interests happen to lie at the disposal of men, who have neither the heart to care for the success of a generous enterprise, nor the talent to appreciate it.

It is much better, for the right Christian economy of a town, when the rule of parochial equity, in seat-letting, tends to the disappointment of capitalists than to the disappointment of labourers. By the former disappointment, an effective interest is created in behalf of more churches; and the inconvenience of a limited accommodation is made to fall upon those who are most able to remedy and to extend it; and these wealthy outcasts can form into a powerful body of application for an additional church—so that to reject the applications of the wealthy, in favour of the poor, is to walk in that direct line which leads to the increase of our ecclesiastical provision in great cities. Whereas, to reject the applications of the poor, in favour of the wealthy, is just to reverse this process. It is to make irrecoverable outcasts of those who are without the means of at all helping themselves. It is to damp, into irrecoverable apathy, the whole class of society to which they belong. It is to extinguish the first hopeful symptoms of a revival, throughout that mass of human beings, whose estrangement from all the sanctities of Sabbath observation, is of such deadly import to the well-being of a community. It is to stifle that incipient voice which arises from among the poorer orders themselves; and, by listening to which, a healing influence would have come back upon them, and restored to soundness that great foundation of a country's prosperity and peace—the virtue of its people. It is thus that men, who are the very first to tremble at the outbreakings of radicalism, may lie the most deeply chargeable with the guilt of having fed and sustained

it in its principle—withholding, as they do, the best counteraction to all the brooding elements of a fiery and mischievous fermentation.

Of all the outrages, either felt or fancied, on the rights of the people, this is the one which is followed by the surest retaliation; and that, not so much from its present influence in swelling the tide of discontent, as from its final result in the more confirmed irreligion of our city populace. It forms the addition of at least one real, to the whole previous list of their imaginary grievances; and leaves upon its aspect such a glaring expression of preference to the desires of the wealthy, over the righteous demands of the poor, as not only to furnish one topic of substantial provocation, but as to impart a plausibility to all the others. This, however, does not constitute the main soreness of that cruel and unfeeling policy which we have endeavoured to expose, and which lies in the effect that it has to perpetuate the depravity of the multitude, and that too, in the face of a willingness, on the part of the multitude, to be set on the path which leads both to tranquillity and to righteousness.

We deem this topic, of seat-letting, to be of sufficient importance in itself, for justifying all the amplitude of remark and argument that we have bestowed upon it: and, we think, it may farther be employed for the purpose of illustrating a distinction, which we shall find most closely and essentially applicable to many other particulars connected with the Christian and Civic Economy of towns; and which the reader would do well to apprehend and to fix in his remembrance, more

especially, throughout the whole of our intended lucubrations on the subject of pauperism. We advert to the distinction between what may be called a natural and a political difficulty in the way of any given reformation. There is no natural difficulty in the way of certain benefits that would accrue from a right arrangement of matters as to seat-letting. But there is a political difficulty in the way of initiating and maintaining the arrangement itself. Grant the simple enactment of a preference for parishioners to all vacant places in their own parish church, as the vacancies occur, and a faithful adherence to this enactment; and, *in the nature of things*, there is no let or hindrance in the way of a very great improvement on the economy of our cities—and that, with little more to do, than just to wait the operation of this new method. Vacancies will, by deaths and removals, occur, as a matter of course. Other things being equal, parishioners will, by the mere influence of juxtaposition, aided, as it generally is, by the influence of connexion with their minister, on other grounds, prefer accommodation in their own, to accommodation in other churches. If there be any thing in the very superior attractions of one, or more, of the city clergy, to disturb this preference, this will operate within his parish, as well as beyond its limits, and secure an overwhelming superiority of competition for seats from his own parishioners; so as to give to the favourite minister all the surer chance of at length realising a parochial congregation. This, in the very order of nature, he will sooner or later arrive at; and we should then, upon

the whole, behold, under such a system of management, the ministers of a city having each a compact and concentrated influence over his own separate portion of it—an influence that would be inconceivably augmented, from the very circumstance of such a number of families, with whom he stood parochially associated through the week, being now his stated hearers on the Sabbath; and an influence, which the whole operation of the principle of locality would enable him to wield with tenfold greater facility and effect than he ever can do over the hearers of a general congregation. There may be artificial impediments in the way of setting up this arrangement, but there are no natural impediments to it: for, after it is set up and acted on, the nature both of individual man and of society affords nought but openings and facilities in its favour; and, without more than the ordinary strenuousness of average and every day people being farther concerned in the matter, the benefits that would flow from it are altogether incalculable. Nature would soon unpeople a parish church of its present sitters. Nature would more incline parishioners than others to fill up the vacancies. Nature would put into the breast of each clergyman a far more lively interest in a parish where he had a thousand, than in one where he had only a hundred hearers, and would vest him with a far more useful ascendancy over it. Nature would prompt him to the exertions of a more willing activity, in a field that was crowded with the members of his own congregation; and even should his natural habits, as in some cases it undoubtedly is,

be not labour but indolence, the reformed economy would, at least, render any slender week-day attentions which he was disposed to bestow, ten times more effective than they ever can be under the existing economy. So, that in respect of natural difficulties, or such difficulties as attach inherently and essentially to the subject of management, there are none, but the contrary, in the way of bringing about a desirable result; and whatever difficulties we have to contend with, in this matter, are altogether factitious or political,—appertaining, not to the constitution of the thing to be managed, but to the constitution of what may be called the managing apparatus; not to the subject that we want to be operated upon, but to the agency who now work it.

For example, the difficulty, in the present instance, lies not in the parish where we should like the arrangement, that we are now pleading for, to be carried into effect, but it lies among the arcana of city business and city committeeship. It is not a natural but a political difficulty. It consists in a kind of *vis inertiæ*, whereby it is so hard to move any municipal body out of its old tendencies. The field of contest is not the population, but among the heads and rulers of the population; and the mighty resistance that is to be overcome, nearly all arises from the rust and the tardiness which adhere to the ponderous machine of a city corporation, that obstinately perseveres in its wonted cycle, and whose subordinate committees as obstinately persevere in their wonted epicycles. The way to overcome this, no doubt, is by the force

of persuasion, addressed to the present and the living administrators of this superintendance. But, without meaning the slightest disrespect to these individuals, who, to say the least of them, must, in regard to intellect, be on the fair level and average of humanity, there is, perhaps, no class of men who are better entitled to a sensitive dislike and jealousy of all innovation. They are incessantly assailed, and upon all hands, with counsel and criticism; and full many must be the crudities of undigested speculation that are submitted to their notice; and the very labour of separating the precious from the vile of the suggestions, wherewith they are plied, must be oppressive to men who are already overborne; and it is no wonder that they should feel the disturbance of any change whatever, in their accustomed routine, to be harassing and vexatious; and the public are really not aware of all the indulgence that is due, upon these grounds, to men who make such important surrenders of time and of convenience to the well-being of the community—so, that it was not with a view to advance any charge, but with a view to impress what we deem a distinction of capital importance, that we have given way to the train of our present observations. A natural difficulty is that which is encountered on the field of direct and immediate management; and after we have obtained an actual occupation of the field, in the way that is desired. A political difficulty is that which is encountered previously to taking this occupation, and, generally, on the road to it; and is often of a nature so impracticable, that the operation, out of which

a good result was promised, may never be begun. The natural difficulty lies with the thing to be managed, and is a let or hindrance between the operation and the result. The political difficulty lies with the existing managers, and is a let or hindrance anterior to the operation, and often preventive of it. The operation of the rule of seat-letting would most surely lead to the result that we anticipate, and have attempted to explain; because there is no natural impediment among our men of private condition in parishes, but the reverse, in the way of such a consequence. But, among our men of public office in corporations, there is a very strong political impediment in the way of establishing, and practically abiding by, the rule.

The truth and importance of this distinction will come to be more fully recognised when we treat of Pauperism. The example of nearly all Europe, with the exception of England, proves, that there is no natural difficulty in the way of a population being subsisted, without almost the single case of an individual perishing by want; and that, without any legal or compulsory provision for the poor. But now, that such a provision has been established in this country; and that the great unwieldy corporation of the state must be moved, ere any step can be taken towards the abolition of it; and that the subordinate courts of administration, in every parish, have sunk and settled into the obstinacy of an old practical habit, in all their proceedings—there is a host of political difficulties that must be met and overcome, not ere it can be proved with

what certainty the people, when left to themselves, will find their own way to their own comfort and independence, but ere the measure shall be carried of actually leaving the people to themselves. We think that there is no natural difficulty which stands in the way of the success of such an experiment, *if tried;* but we feel that there are many political difficulties in the way of putting the experiment to the trial. We hold it a practicable thing, to conduct any parish, either in a city or in the country, to the old economy of a Scottish parish, on the strength of an arrangement which we shall afterwards endeavour to set, in more detailed exposition, before our readers; and that there is no impediment on the parochial field, which is the real theatre of the experiment, in the way of final and looked for success. The struggle is not with the population, for obtaining the success of the arrangement; but the struggle is with our legislature and our municipalities, for obtaining the arrangement itself. The place of most formidable resistance is not in the outer, but the inner department of this business; and the occasion of it is, when, in the hall of deliberation, the attempt is made to break up our existing artificial economy, and thus to prevail over the dislike and the prejudices of hacknied functionaries, and to carry that nearly impregnable front, wherewith all novelty is sure to be withstood, by the clerks, and the conveners, and the committeemen, of an old establishment. The battle is not with the natural difficulties of the problem, but with its political difficulties—not with the laws of human nature, as to be found in the parish where the

experiment is made, but with the tendencies of human nature, as exhibited on that arena of public discussion and debate where the experiment is proposed. In the work of abolishing legalised charity, the heaviest conflict will not be with the natural poverty of the lower orders, but with that pride of argument, and that tenacity of opinion, and all those political feelings and asperities which obtain among the higher orders. In short, we hold that there is nothing in the condition of the people which opposes a barrier against the abolition of all legal and compulsory pauperism; but that there is a very strong initial barrier in the condition of our laws, and courts, and long established usages. In the practical solution of the question of public charity, the recipients will not be found so difficult of management as the lawgivers and administrators. There is a method by which might be effected, and almost without difficulty, the abolition of public charity among our plebeians—but the consent of our patricians must be obtained, ere we are free to put the method into operation: and what we affirm is, that it is a greater achievement to obtain leave and liberty for using the method, than to obtain success for the method itself; or, in other words, that the great impediment to the removal of this sore national distemper, lies not among the plebeians, but among the patricians of the commonwealth.

But there is another distinction, which we must labour to impress—even that which obtains between the way in which a Christian, and the way in which a Civic good is rendered to the population of cities,

by the establishment of a good ecclesiastical system amongst them.

We should not call that a Christian benefit to any individual, which conduces not either to his security, or to his preparation, for an inheritance in heaven. Ere he is Christianly the better, for the labour that has been bestowed upon him, there must be wrought in his soul that change of principle and of character, without which, he will for ever remain an outcast from the abodes of a blissful eternity. We shall not, nor is it necessary, to dogmatise, at present, about the precise nature of this change. We shall only suppose, that some change or other must be made to pass upon every human heart, ere he who owns it has passed from the state of an heir of condemnation, to that of the heir of a glorious immortality. Any benefit short of this, is not entitled to the denomination of a Christian benefit, and it is just by the number of individuals who receive this distinct benefit, each for himself, that we would estimate the amount of Christian good done to a population.

Now, there is no doubt that this good would be promoted, by the arrangement which we have suggested, by a full parochial attendance of the people upon acceptable ministers, and by the labours of these ministers, now rendered greatly more effective, in virtue of that more strict parochial relationship which we have ventured to recommend. And, yet it is not to be disguised, that even in those congregations which are reputed to be the most prosperous and flourishing, the number of actual converts may bear a small proportion, indeed, to

the number even of steady and interested hearers —that, in respect to the whole auditory, they may constitute a very little flock, and stand forth a peculiar people, in the midst of the many still sunk in the lethargy and unconcern of nature—that, as the fruit of the labour, and close earnestness, of a lengthened incumbency, all that a most assiduous pastor shall leave behind him may be a mere fraction of his parishioners, turned, through his means, to the genuine faith and discipleship of Christianity. This is what will most readily be admitted, by those who rate Christianity according to the high standard of the New Testament—who demand, as tests of the reality of conversion, those lofty and spiritual characteristics that were so current in the early churches, however rarely exemplified in modern days—who require, for eternity, a devotedness of heart, as well as a decency of external observation—and are not satisfied with any transition of habit, short of that thorough regenerative process which sanctifies the affections as well as reforms the external history, and by which man becomes a new creature in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now, if this spiritual renovation, to the feelings and the principles of peculiar Christianity, be an event of such exceeding rarity—if it but occur at distant intervals, to cheer and to reward the labours even of our most devoted clergymen—if, in the best attended ministry, and under the busiest application of powerful and persuasive influences, it still holds true, that though many are called, yet few are converted,—Then it but leads us again to the

conclusion, that let churches be built, and parishes be organized, and the wisest and fittest arrangements be adopted, the quantity of Christian good which is in consequence done, may be in very minute proportion, indeed, to the number of human beings among whom it is attempted; that a very handful out of the untouched mass may be all the harvest that is reaped, and that too, by a machine of which we are required to enlarge the compass and the magnitude, so as to make it commensurate to the whole population. And thus, both with enlightened Christians, who are aware of the extreme paucity of that faith which is unto salvation, and with mere secular philanthropists, who can, at the same time, perceive how little, even under the most close and diligent administration of the ordinances of the gospel, the real sacredness of the gospel is ever diffused throughout the general bulk of any congregation;—with both, may there be an impression, as if the effect that we promised, from the setting up of a right Christian apparatus in cities, was most sanguinely overrated—with the former, who are most thoroughly, and, as we think, most rightly convinced, that, without a special and sanctifying influence from above, no engine of human contrivance is at all available to the conversion of a human soul—and, with the latter, who will feel that, if all which is gained be but the bringing down of some mysterious and preternatural influence from heaven, on a mere scantling of the population, then the labour of raising so vast a spiritual organization is not only thrown away upon an inadequate object, but upon an object that is

only prized by a few unintelligible fanatics, with whom they can feel no sympathy, and will hold no fellowship.

We refer the former of these two classes to the first chapter of this work, where we have attempted to demonstrate the good and the necessity of a terrestrial apparatus, for the distribution of that living water, or that spiritual influence, which cometh from above; and we have only farther to remind them, that even though a few more of the whole human race be thereby snatched from the common ruin of our nature, and be recovered to a blissful immortality, it is not from them that we should expect any complaint of the inadequacy of such a result, to the means or to the labour that may have previously been expended. And, besides, it is to be presumed that the extended means of Christian instruction which we have ventured to recommend, would, at least, be productive of as great a proportion of additional Christianity, as the present means are of the Christianity that is now actually produced. And would they, because so little is produced, set aside the means that are already in operation? Would they discontinue the expense of all the existing churches, because in almost every church, it is still the fearful minority, we have reason to apprehend, who are brought under the saving power of the gospel, and so are raised, by spiritual education, into a meetness for paradise? The truth is, that whenever a more copious descent of the Holy Ghost shall come down upon us, it will pass through all the channels of conveyance that have been furnished for it in the

land—entering into pulpits, and then spreading itself over congregations, and finding its way, most readily, through the most free and frequented pathways of communication that have been opened up between the ministers of religion and the people among whom they expatiate. By subdividing parishes, we just multiply these pathways; and by localising parishes, we just make the pathways shorter, and more convenient and accessible, than before. We do not set aside the doctrine of a spiritual influence; for we believe that it is this which will be the primary and the essential agent in that great moral regeneration that awaits our species. But just as in the irrigating processes of Egypt, the reservoirs are constructed, and the furrows are drawn, and every field on the banks of the Nile is put into readiness for the coming inundation—so we, knowing that the Spirit maketh its passage into the human heart, by the word and the ordinances of the gospel, are just labouring at a right process of spiritual irrigation, when we provide such arrangements as will bring the greatest number of human beings into broadest and most recurring contact with this word, and with these ordinances.

But, at present, we have it still more at heart to propitiate the latter class, or our mere civil and political philanthropists, to the cause of a right ecclesiastical system for cities. And the argument we would urge upon them is, that, under such a system, the civic benefit which they most care for, is both anterior, in regard of time, and greatly more extended, in regard of diffusion, than the

Christian benefit about which, we fear, they are much less solicitous. The fact admits of being explained, but we have only time, just now, to announce it,—that the preacher who, by his doctrine, is best fitted to convert the few, is also best fitted to congregate the many,—that he who is the most powerful, in respect of the saving influence which he causes to descend on the very little flock, is also the most popular, in respect of the attractive influence wherewith he assembles the multitude around his stated ministrations; and in a word, that he who is most qualified for the Christian good, of turning some from darkness to spiritual light, is also most qualified for the civic good, of turning many from their habits of Sabbath riot, and Sabbath profanation, to, at least, a personal attendance on the services of Christianity. It is certainly a question, full of interest, what that is, in the lessons of an orthodox minister, which draws the crowd around his pulpit, and yet fails short of reaching an effective Christian influence to more, perhaps, than a very small proportion of them. Without resolving the question, we would turn to this fair application the undoubted fact upon which it is founded; we would bid our philanthropists mark the distinction which obtains between the Christian and the civic good that may be rendered to a population. The one extends but to the select few, who have been reclaimed from the love of the world, to the love and the spiritual services of Him who made the world. The other may extend to the whole of a crowded congregation, reclaimed from the outlandish heathenism of their

old practices, to the decencies of Sabbath attire and Sabbath observation. There is a humanising, that is far short of a Christianising, influence. There is a soberness of habit to which a general population may be trained, and that, under the very process which conducts a few of that population to spirituality of heart. The very practice of church-going would make a more orderly and pacific society on earth, even though it should fail of preparing more than a very few of that society for heaven. It is thus, that, by a deed of acceptable patronage, the magistrates of a city may confer a temporal benefit on the community, that shall be felt extensively, and almost instantaneously—even though the minister of their appointment may have to labour most strenuously for years, and yet be the instrument of a Christian blessing to but an exceeding small number of families. The fact is melancholy to those who are engrossed with the considerations of death and judgment, and the various concerns of the imperishable soul. But we now address those who are taken up with the mere accommodations of the fleeting journey of this world's existence—whose demand, as the rulers of a town, is more for quiet citizens, than for holy and regenerated believers—who should like men to be so far moral as to be manageable, whether or not they shall also be so far spiritual as to be heavenly—who want, at all events, to have a commonwealth free from the profligacy that leads to turbulence on earth, however short its vast majority may fall of that piety which leads to triumph, and to a rich inheritance in paradise. Now, what we

affirm is, that on the higher ground of Christian usefulness, a right ecclesiastical system may only reclaim from the evil to the good, its tens or its fifties, out of the teeming multitudes of a city parish; but that while it is doing so, there is also a collateral influence, by which it reclaims its thousands and tens of thousands, from what is evil, to what is good, on the lower ground of civic usefulness.

To estimate the Christian good done to an individual, made pious, through the labours of a devoted clergyman, we have only to compute the difference between a ruined and a blissful eternity. To estimate the civic good done to a town, the majority of whose people stood estranged from the ordinances of Christianity, but are now, by the multiplication of churches, and the right exercise of patronage, reclaimed to attendance upon them, we must bethink ourselves a little of the many substantial influences, upon the general character, which such a habit will necessarily bring along with it. Conceive, then, one family, in humble and operative life, trained, though it may only be to the outward regularities of a Christian Sabbath; and taking respectable occupancy of its own pew, where it exhibits the domestic group of well doing parents and well disciplined children—each exchanging, on that day, the garb of citizenship for the becoming holiday attire, which thrift and management have enabled them to provide; and retained in constant attendance on the lessons of a minister, from whom, if they do not inhale the vital spirit, they will, at least, imbibe, though perhaps insensi-

bly, somewhat of the sedate and moral tone of Christianity, and be strengthened in their taste for the decencies of even-going citizenship. May we not read, on the very aspect of such a family, the indications of virtue, and order, and industry, through the week, and a manifest superiority, in all these attributes, over another family, that spends its Sabbath recklessly and at large? It is certainly not from families of a right Sabbatical habit, that popular violence will draw the aliment by which it is upholden; for it is a habit which holds no alliance, whatever, with dissipation, or idleness, or discontent. And, therefore, could a right exercise of patronage simply induce a greatly more general attendance of the lower ranks upon divine service —then, far more readily and extensively than the spread of thorough conversion among the people, would there be the spread of such secondary virtues as should amount to a civic good that were altogether incalculable.

If in pure Christianity, which we have attempted to prove is popular Christianity, there be an initial charm to draw the people around its ministrations, and that greatly beyond its final effect, in turning them from the children of this world, to the children of light; and if it be further true, that the very habit of Sabbath regularity stands associated with all the other habits of sober and pacific citizenship, then, though the great majority of a congregation, so attracted and detained, shall still continue to be of this world, yet are the virtue and tranquillity of the world greatly promoted, even by the more superficial transformation which they

have thus been made to undergo. So, that by every deed of acceptable church patronage, though small be the accession which may thereby be gained to the kingdom of heaven, yet a mighty accession will be made to the stock of good civic accomplishments and properties upon earth. Nor is there another way by which our municipal rulers could more effectually mark the wisdom of their policy, or do so much to meliorate the distemper of a vicious and disorderly population, than by the appointment, to their vacancies, of such Christian ministers as are best suited to the taste of the labouring classes, and who of this hold out the most authentic and palpable testimony, by the simple fact of their overflowing congregations.

The distinction between the Christian and the civic good that is done to a community were still more apparent, did the minister localise upon a given territory ; and as he went from house to house, in week-day visitations, meet, at every turn, with the greetings of affectionate recognition from the members of his now parochial congregation. Throughout the whole of this progress, he might rarely meet with the heirs and expectants of a blissful eternity—yet, who does not see, that beyond the limits of a circle so select and peculiar, he bears about with him a humanising influence that may be felt in almost every habitation ? It is a sad contemplation to him whose heart is occupied with the weight and reality of eternal things, that out of so vast a population, a mere handful of converts may be the whole fruit of a lengthened and laborious incumbency. And yet it is an experimental truth, that in respect

of temporal and immediate good, the whole population may be sensibly bettered, by the ever recurring presence of an affectionate pastor in the midst of them. The primary impulse, it is true, on which he sets out among his people, is the good of their immortality; and, in the occasional fulfilment of this high errand, he finds his encouragement and reward. But he scatters abroad, and far more largely, among the families, another good, which, though but of secondary and subordinate importance in his eyes, is enough to stamp him, in the estimation of every civil and political ruler, as by far the most useful servant of the community. There is a substantial, though unnoticed, charm in the visit of a superior. There is a felt compliment in his attentions, which raises an emotion in the breast, the very opposite of that disdainful sentiment towards the higher orders of society, that is now of such alarming prevalence amongst our operative population. There is a real contribution made to the earthly moralities of the poor man, by the consciousness of that friendly tie which unites him in an acquaintanceship that is ever growing with the minister of his parish. The very aim that is made, by the people, to afford him a decent reception, in the cleanliness of their houses, and the dress of their children, is not to be overlooked in our estimate of the bland and beneficial influences that accompany his frequent reiterations over the face of his allotted vineyard. There is, in all these ways, and in many more, a most effective, wholesome, and widely spread influence, coming out of the relationship that subsists between a local clergy-

man, and the families that reside within the limits of his superintendance—an influence which, in respect of its amount upon the individual, may come far short of that Christian good that issues in everlasting blessedness; but which, in respect of its diffusiveness, tells throughout the whole host of his parishioners, and issues in the important earthly or civic good of a better habited population—an influence that will, at least, reach so far as to reduce their profligacy, and to quiet their turbulence, and to soften all their political exasperations, and to beget a kindly amalgamation of the various classes with each other, and, if not to secure their eternity, yet altogether to shed a comfort and a virtuousness over the pilgrimage which leads to it.

It both serves to spread this moral cement, and forms a mighty addition to its quantity, when the minister, by means of a well-appointed eldership, can multiply among his people the number of their Christian friends, who enter their abodes, and take a kindly interest in their families. Even with such an apparatus, we might expect the amount of Christian good to be only fractional, in respect to the whole population; yet this would not prevent a civic good, which, in a very few years, might be almost universal. Only let that monstrous coalition be broken up, in virtue of which the office of a spiritual labourer has been so wofully neutralised, by the duties and the dispensations of pauperism being laid upon it—let the jealousies and the heart-burnings incidental to such a business, be conclusively done away from all the ministrations of Christianity—let the clergyman have coadjutors

who, like himself, may go forth among the families, on the single errand of Christian advice or Christian consolation—let them watch their best opportunities, and, in an especial manner, never neglect those openings of advantage, where sickness paves the way for the welcome admittance of a religious visitor, or the death of some near and beloved relative makes his sympathies and attentions so inexpressibly soothing—let them, perhaps, in addition to the influence of their sincerity and worth, be a little raised, as they generally are, above the mass of the commonalty, in respect of fortune and intelligence,—And the effect of such an order of things, in attempering the social fabric, and in multiplying the links of confidence and good-will between man and man, were altogether incalculable. A certain portion of good Christianity would, in all likelihood, come out of this arrangement; but a far greater proportion of good citizenship would, most assuredly, come out of it: and we repeat it, that all those who take a greater interest in the latter object than they do in the former, are still in the most direct way of advancing their own favourite cause, when, through the medium of the former, they attempt to reach the latter; or, when in devising for the temporal welfare of that community, with whose concerns they are entrusted, they do their uttermost for improving the ecclesiastical system of great towns, by the multiplication of churches, and the appointment of acceptable and efficient clergymen.

And here it may not be out of place to remark, how much it serves to divide and to weaken the

force of popular violence, when the vast and overgrown city is broken down into separate parochial jurisdictions—where each is isolated as much as possible from the other, by its visible landmarks, and its own distinct and busy apparatus of management; and where the people, instead of all looking one way, to the distant and general head, and forming into a combined array of hostile feeling and prejudice against it, are, in virtue of a local economy, which possesses interest enough to have formed a sort of *esprit de corps* among the inhabitants of every subordinate district, habituated to look several ways to that nearer and more interesting *regime* by which they are respectively surrounded. In a great town, where the parishes are little better than nominal, and there is no affecting relationship between administrators and subjects, all the public and political tendencies of the popular mind run towards one point, and may form into one impetuous and overwhelming surge against the reigning authority of the place. The more that this else unmanageable mass is penetrated and split up into fragments, and that the effervescence which is in each is made to play around a separate machinery of its own, the more safe will be the leading corporation from any of those passing tempests, by which the multitude is often thrown into fierce and fitful agitation. A parochial economy is not the less effectual, for this purpose, that the jurisdictions which it institutes, instead of being of a legal, are rather of a moral and charitable character. The kindly intercourse that is promoted between the various classes, under such an arrange-

ment as this, is the best of all possible emollients, in every season of political restlessness. It is the distance between the ruler and his subjects, which, whether in the unwieldy state, or in the unwieldy metropolis, leaves room for those dark and brooding imaginations that are so apt to fret and infuriate into a storm. The more that this distance is alleviated, by the subdivisions of locality, the more do the charities of common companionship mingle in the commotion, and exude an oil upon the waters, that assuages their violence. They are the towns of an empire, which form the mighty organs of every great political overthrow, and if a right parochial system in towns would serve to check, or rather to soften, the turbulence that is in them, then ought the establishment of such a system to be regarded by our rulers as one of the best objects of patriotism.

There is no class of philanthropists who ought to be more aware of the distinction between a Christian and a civic good, and of the way in which the one is outstript by the other, than the teachers of Sabbath schools. A very few months of discipline, in these seminaries, will witness a very palpable transformation on the manners, and habits, and general appearance of the young pupils. The cleanliness, and the docility, and the scholarship, and the decency of demeanour, and the friendliness of regard towards their instructor—these may all be induced, in a short time, on the great majority of attendants; and they are all so many important contributions of civic good rendered to that community, in the business and concerns of which they

are afterwards to partake. The direct consequence of such juvenile training, is to rear them into better members of society than they would otherwise have been; and yet there is not a more familiar exhibition than that of a visible growth, in these secondary accomplishments, on the part of almost all the learners, while, perhaps, not a single individual can be quoted, as having been the subject of a sound and scriptural conversion during the period of his attendance. It is the part of a Christian labourer to persevere in his assiduities with diligence and prayer; and though only one, out of many, should be turned from the darkness of nature to the light of the gospel, to think not that such a result is too insignificant for the big and busy operation of many years. And far less, ought the mere secular philanthropist to grudge the expense or the magnitude of such an apparatus, for he may reckon on a greatly more abundant crop of that fruit which is unto social prosperity here, than of that fruit which is unto immortality hereafter. His objects, at least, will be extensively promoted by the diffusion of Sabbath teaching among the outcast and neglected families of a city population. He is not to measure the extent of civic, by the extent of Christian good that may emanate from a right ecclesiastical system; and however languidly the mere theologian may lend his concurrence to an economy of means, on the ground of their slender efficacy in regenererating the souls of men—yet may the municipal functionary be very sure that, for the earthly good which he aspires after, no more likely expedient can be devised, for humanising the

lower orders, and adding to the stock of those virtues which go to strengthen and uphold a commonwealth.

And we must not, when on this subject, omit the fine remark of Wilberforce, respecting the power of Christianity to elevate the general standard of morals, even in countries where it has failed of positively converting more than a very small proportion of the inhabitants. The direct good which Christianity does, is when it stamps the impress of its doctrine on the few whom it makes to be the living epistles of Christ Jesus. But they are epistles which, to use the language of holy writ, may be seen and read of all men. Society at large may not be able to appreciate the hidden principle of the evangelical life; but they can, at least, peruse the inscription of its visible graces and virtues, and can render them the homage, both of their full esteem and of their partial imitation. It is thus that Christians are the salt of the earth; nor is it known how much they contribute to the general healthfulness and preservation of that community, throughout which they lie scattered. The presence of but one Christian individual in a city lane, may tell, by a sort of reflex and secondary influence, on the general tone of his vicinity. His example may not be of force enough to regenerate the hearts of his acquaintances; but it may be of force enough to induce a certain reformation upon their habits: and whether the fire of sacredness shall pass or not, from one bosom to another, that light, by which the outward history of every genuine disciple is irradiated, may

be borrowed and sent back, though with fainter and duller brilliancy, from all his associates. It is thus that, through the medium of few Christians, many may be moulded into better citizens; and notwithstanding the exceeding rarity of conversion, yet, by that sort of repeating process, wherewith it acts on the social habits and earthly moralities of the species, may there emanate from the very little flock a real, though unacknowledged blessing, over the whole face of a world that lieth in wickedness.

We hold it necessary to have expatiated thus much on the relation that subsists between the Christian and the civic good that may be rendered to a town population, because we are aware of a certain feeling, wherewith the whole speculation is shrewdly and sagaciously looked to, as if it were at best a sanguine, though plausible romance, that could never be realised. And, among this class of sceptics, we have to rank some of our soundest theologians, who, aware of the extreme paucity of conversion, even under means of the likeliest devising, are led to anticipate therefrom a corresponding paucity of reformation in the social and secular habits of the people. Now, we altogether defer to their judgment, in regard to the paucity of conversion; and we most thoroughly concur in their affirmation, that few are the people who now walk on the path which leadeth to life everlasting; and, acceding to the justness of their demand, for a Christianity as strict, and lofty, and spiritual, as that which is portrayed in the New Testament, and conscious, at the same time, how rarely it is exemplified in our days, we hold with them, that

a right machinery may be erected, and put for years into busy operation, and yet that a few additional gleanings, out of a field teeming with imperishable creatures, may form the whole amount of what is thereby secured and gathered in for the kingdom of heaven. But, with our eyes perfectly open to this melancholy likelihood, we are still, and even on Christian grounds alone, desirous of the machinery. It has its indispensable uses, as we have already attempted to show, even in the season of most copious descent of living water from above; and if, ere that day of refreshing shall arrive, it be instrumental in adding, though only one, to the number of the saved, we think that, on the high count and reckoning of eternity, the profit of the apparatus far outweighs both the labour and the expense of it. But it is on civic ground, we think, that such a machinery would earn the triumph of its earliest and most conspicuous achievements; and we have to entreat the attention of our mere ecclesiastics to the way in which the one influence may be diffused over the whole extent of humanity, while the other remains circumscribed within those barriers which can only be forced by the weapons of a higher warfare—ere they shall resolutely give up the cause of civil and economical improvement, as alike inaccessible, by ecclesiastical means, to all the efforts of human strength, and to all the devices of human policy.

But it were an object of more immediate and practical importance to overcome the incredulity of our civil functionaries upon this subject; to the imaginations of many of whom, we fear, there is,

in the peculiar walk of clergymen, something cabalistic, and mysterious, and remote from the whole business of ordinary affairs. The direct aim of a spiritual labourer is to work in his people a spiritual regeneration of character; and this is a matter that may, to the eye of clerks and council men, stand too much aloof from the scenes and transactions of our every-day world, to have any intelligible bearing on the department which they occupy. When the argument is addressed to a man of common official experience, by which the civic good of a population is linked and implicated with the operation of a high evangelical influence, that he does not comprehend, then the whole anticipation that is founded upon it, will bear to him very much of an ideal character: and, when he is farther told of the exceeding few who are saved and sanctified by the truth as it is in Jesus, he will very naturally conclude, that the specified cause, and the predicted consequence, are alike insignificant; and that the result of an improved ecclesiastical system, in cities, will be as paltry, in point of extent, as it is aërial, in point of speculation. If Christian regeneration be as rarely exemplified in actual life as poetical romance is, then it may be thought, that after all, the promise of any great sensible good to be done to society, is just as unlikely of fulfilment from the doings of a priesthood, as from the dreams of poetry. These form some of the elements of that indisposition which obtains among our rulers to the erection of city churches, and the subdivision of city parishes; and, therefore, it is the more necessary to expound those more palpa-

ble human influences, on which hinges the dependance between a vigorous and well filled up Christian economy, on the one hand, and a great popular reformation, on the other, in all the virtues of good neighbourhood, and good citizenship. It is the minister, after all, who most urges the spiritualities of Christian faith and holiness, that most attracts the multitude to congregate into a stated audience, and thus to exchange a former looseness of habit for the decencies of Sabbath observation;—and it is he who is generally found to be most assiduous in week-day ministrations;—and it is he who will most readily obtain the zealous co-operation of others, to mingle in all the charities of intercourse along with him, among the families of sunken and neglected plebeianism;—and though the work of grace, for another world, be still restricted to a small minority of his parish, yet a sure collateral attendant upon his labours is, that a work of converse and cordiality is carried abroad throughout the mass of his people, which tends to heighten the aspect, and to improve the whole economy of the present world. This is a process, the *rationale* of which might be obvious enough, even to a mere earthly understanding; and so might the power and charm of locality; and so might the effect of one Christian's example, in raising the standard of morality among many who are not Christians; and so might the tendency of Sabbath schooling, both to induce a more orderly and civilized habit among the young, and to strengthen the tie of kindliness between the teachers and the taught, or between the higher and lower ranks of the com-

munity. There is nought surely of the mystic or unsubstantial in any of these influences; and if nevertheless, they be the most faithful stewards of the mysteries of God, from whom they are most ready to descend on the families of our general population, there ought to be an indication here, to our men of political ascendancy, whether in the state or in the city corporation, of what that is which forms our best and cheapest defence against the evils of a rude, and lawless, and profligate community.

CHAPTER X

On the Bearing which a right Christian Economy has upon Pauperism.

We are able to affirm, on the highest of all authorities, that the poor shall be with us always—or, in other words, that it is vain to look for the extinction of poverty from the world. And, yet we hold it both desirable and practicable to accomplish the extinction of pauperism: so that between the state of poverty and that of pauperism, there must be a distinction, which, to save confusion, ought to be kept in mind, and to be clearly apprehended.

The epithet poor has a far wider range of application than among the lower orders of the community. We may speak, and speak rightly, of a poor nobleman, or a poor bishop, or a poor baronet. It is enough to bring down the epithet on

any individual, that out of his earnings or property he is not able to maintain himself in the average style of comfort that obtains throughout the class of society to which he belongs. The earl who cannot afford a carriage, and the labourers who cannot afford the fare and the clothing of our general peasantry, however different their claims to our sympathy may be, by being currently termed poor, are both made to share alike in this designation.

To be poor is primarily to be in want;—and even though the want should be surely provided for, by the kindness of neighbours, yet is the epithet still made to rest on the individual who originally wore it. The aged female householder, who is both destitute and diseased, may, in virtue of the notice that she has attracted, be upheld in greater abundance than any occupier in the humble alley of her habitation. And yet it may with truth be said, that she is the poorest of them all—poor in respect of her own capacity for her own support, though comfortable in respect of the support that is actually administered to her. She, even after the charitable provision that has thus been attached to her lot, is always termed poor, and in this sense do we understand the prophecy of our Saviour, that the poor shall be with us always. She, in the midst of her comforts, still exemplifies the prediction; and we doubt not, that there will be such exemplifications to the end of time. She is poor, and yet she is not in want. The condition of poverty, arising from a defect of power or of means on the part of him who occupies it, will ever, we apprehend, be a frequent circumstance in society; while

the wants of poverty, arising from a defect in the care of relatives, or in the humanity of friends and observers, will, we trust, at length be exclusively done away. So that even after the charity of the millennial age shall have taken full possession of our species, may the prophecy still find its verification under an economy of things where the state of poverty snall be at times exemplified ; but where the sufferings of poverty, from the vigilance and promptitude of such sympathies as are quickened and kept alive by the influence of the gospel, shall be for ever unknown.

It was with the benevolent purpose of hastening so desirable a consummation, that poor rates were instituted in England. A fund is raised in each of the parishes, by a legal and compulsory operation ; out of which a certain quantity of aliment is distributed among those residents who can substantiate the plea of their wants, to the satisfaction of its administrators. A man is, or ought to be poor, and that referably too, not to any of the higher classes of society, as a poor clergyman or a poor gentleman, but referably to the labouring classes of society ; or, he ought, in respect of his own personal means, to be beneath the average condition of our peasantry, ere he is admitted upon the poor's fund. When so admitted he comes under the denomination of a pauper. A poor man is a man in want of adequate means for his own subsistence. A pauper is a man who has this want supplemented in whole or in part, out of a legal and compulsory provision. He would not be a pauper by having the whole want supplied to him

out of the kindness of neighbours, or from the gratuitous allowance of an old master, or from any of the sources of voluntary charity. It is by having relief legally awarded to him, out of money legally raised, that he becomes a pauper. We are just now occupied with the mere business of definitions, but this is a business which is often necessary: and we therefore repeat it, that the state of poverty is that state in which the occupier is unable of himself to uphold the average subsistence of his family; and the state of pauperism is that state in which the occupier has the ability either entirely, or in part, made up to him out of a public and constitutional fund.

But the truth is, that the invention of pauperism, had it been successful, would have gone to annihilate the state of poverty as well as its sufferings. A man cannot be called poor, who has a legal right, on the moment that he touches the borders of indigence, to demand that there his descending progress shall be arrested, and he shall be upheld in a sufficiency of aliment for himself and his family. The law, in fact, has vested him with a property in the land, which he can turn to account, so soon as he treads on the confines of poverty: and had this desire been as effective as was hoped and intended, a state of poverty would have been impossible. A man may retain the designation of poor, who has been relieved from all the discomforts of want, by the generosity of another; but this epithet ought not to fall upon any, who can ward off these discomforts by means of a rightful application for that which is consti-

tutionally his own. So that had this great political expedient been as prosperous in accomplishment as it was mighty in promise, there would have remained no individual to whom the designation of poverty had been applicable—and the wisdom of man would have defeated the prophecy of God. But though the wisdom of man cannot make head against the state of poverty, the charity of man may make head against its sufferings. The truth is, that pauperism has neither done away the condition of poverty, nor alleviated the evils of it. This attempt of legislation to provide all with a right of protection from the miseries of want, has proved vain and impotent; and leaves a strong likelihood behind it, that a more real protection would have been afforded, had the case been abandoned to the unforced sympathies of our nature; and had it been left to human compassion to soften the wretchedness of a state, against the existence of which no artifice of human policy seems to be at all available.

We have already abundantly remarked on the slender influence of a right Christian apparatus, in regard to the very small number that may be Christianised by it out of the whole population—while, at the same time, its influence may be immediately and extensively felt, in regard to the very great number that may be civilised by it. The same relation, of which we have attempted to demonstrate the existence, between the Christian and the civic good that may be done under a right economy in towns, obtains, and in a still more remarkable degree, we think, between the

proper Christian effect that is accomplished in a city parish, and the effect not merely of arresting, but even of driving away its pauperism altogether. Were the conversion of the many an essential step towards the overthrow of pauperism—then by some would the latter effect be regarded as a romantic, and, by others, as a fanatical anticipation. But in like manner as the same economy which works but a minute Christian, may work a mighty civic good; so, while it only does away the blindness and depravity of nature from a very few individuals in a parish, may it, at the same time, do away a corrupt and corrupting pauperism from all its families. We think, that the political achievement of emancipating all from pauperism may be sooner arrived at, under a system of means which has for its main object the Christianity of the people, than the spiritual achievement of emancipating a twentieth part of them from the power of the God of this world, and calling them out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel. Our readers, we trust, are sufficiently familiarised, from the remarks and reasonings of our last chapter, to the compound effect of a good parochial economy over the families among whom it is instituted; and can now clearly perceive, how while there is one influence addressed by it to the spiritual principles of our constitution, which may only tell on a select and scanty peculium from among the general mass—there is another influence addressed by it to the natural principles of our constitution, which tells widely and suddenly on the vast majority of the people. Now, connected too with the question of pauperism, there

are certain strong and urgent natural principles; some of which are powerfully operated upon by the Christian local economy that we would recommend, and all of which tend to hasten the extinction of pauperism, at a rate of far greater velocity than the progress of essential Christianity among the people. So much, indeed, is this our feeling, that while we look on a good Christian economy, as eminently fitted both to sweeten and to accelerate the transition from the charity of human laws to the charity of human kindness, yet we do not think it indispensable to this effect; but that on the simple abolition of a compulsory assessment for the relief of new applicants, there would instantly break forth from innumerable fountains, now frozen or locked up by the hand of legislation, so many refreshing rills on all the places that had been left dry and destitute, by the withdrawment from them of public charity, as would spread a far more equal and smiling abundance than before over the face of society.

The first, and by far the most productive of these fountains, is situated among the habits and economies of the people themselves. It is impossible but that an established system of pauperism must induce a great relaxation on the frugality and providential habits of our labouring classes. It is impossible, but that it must undermine the incentives to accumulation; and, by leading the people to repose that interest on a public provision, which would else have been secured by the effects of their own prudence and their own carefulness, it has dried up far more abundant resources in one quar-

ter than it has opened in another. We know not a more urgent principle of our constitution than self-preservation; and it is a principle which not only shrinks from present suffering, but which looks onward to futurity, and holds up a defence against the apprehended wants and difficulties of the years that are to come. Were the great reservoir of public charity, for the town at large, to be shut, there would soon be struck out many family reservoirs, fed by the thrift and sobriety, which necessity would then stimulate, but which now the system of pauperism so long has superseded;—and from these there would emanate a more copious supply than is at present ministered out of poor rates, to aliment the evening of plebeian life, and to equalise all the vicissitudes of its history.

The second fountain which pauperism has a tendency to shut, and which its abolition would reopen, is the kindness of relatives. One of the most palpable, and at the same time most grievous effects of this artificial system, is the dissolution which it has made of the ties and feelings of relationship. It is this which gives rise to the melancholy list of runaway parents, wherewith whole columns of the provincial newspapers of England are oftentimes filled. And then, as if in retaliation, there is the cruel abandonment of parents, by their own offspring, to the cold and reluctant hand of public charity. In some cases, there may not be the requisite ability; but the actual expense on the part of labourers, for luxuries that might be dispensed with, demonstrates that, in most cases, there is that ability. But it is altogether the ef-

fect of pauperism to deaden the inclination. It has poisoned the strongest affections of nature; and turned inwardly, towards the indulgences of an absorbent selfishness, that stream which else would have flowed out on the needy of our own blood and our own kindred. It has shut those many avenues of domestic kindliness by which, but for its deadening and disturbing influence, a far better and more copious circulation of needful supplies would have been kept up throughout the mass of society. We believe, that were the first fountain restored to its natural play, there would be discharged, from it alone, in the greatest number of instances, a competency for the closing years of the labourer;—and did this resource fail, that the second fountain would come in aid, and send forth, on the decaying parentage of every grown up and working generation more than would replace the dispensations of pauperism.

A third fountain, on which pauperism has set one of its strongest seals, and which would instantly be unlocked on the abolition of the system, is the sympathy of the wealthier for the poorer classes of society. It has transformed the whole character of charity, by turning a matter of love into a matter of litigation: and so, has seared and shut many a heart out of which the spontaneous emanations of good-will would have gone plentifully forth among the abodes of the destitute. We know not how a more freezing arrest can be laid on the current of benevolence, than when it is met in the tone of a rightful, and perhaps, indignant demand for that, wherewith it was ready, on its own proper impulse,

to pour refreshment and relief over the whole field of ascertained wretchedness. There is a mighty difference of effect between an imperative and an imploring application. The one calls out the jealousy of our nature, and puts us upon the attitude of surly and determined resistance. The other calls out the compassion of our nature, and inclines us to the free and willing movements of generosity. It is in the former attitude, that, under a system of overgrown pauperism, we now, generally speaking, behold the wealthy in reference to the working classes of England. They stand to each other in a grim array of hostility—the one thankless and dissatisfied, and stoutly challenging as its due, what the other reluctantly yields, and that as sparingly as possible. Had such been a right state of things, then pity would have been more a superfluous feeling in our constitution ; as its functions would have been nearly superseded by the operation of law and justice. And the truth is, that this sweetener of the ills of life has been greatly stifled by legislation; while the amount of actual and unrelieved wretchedness among the peasantry of England, too plainly demonstrates, that the economy of pauperism has failed to provide an adequate substitute in its room. Were this economy simply broken up, and the fountain of human sympathy again left free to be operated upon by its wonted excitements, and to send out its wonted streams throughout those manifold subordinations by which the various classes of society are bound and amalgamated together—we doubt not that from this alone a more abundant, or, at least, a far more efficient and better-spread

tide of charity would be diffused throughout the habitations of indigence.

But there is still another fountain, that we hold to be greatly more productive even than the last, both in respect to the amount of relief that is yielded by it, and also in respect to the more fit and timely accommodation wherewith it suits itself to the ever varying accidents and misfortunes of our common humanity. There is a local distance between the wealthy and the poor, which is unfavourable to the operation of the last fountain, but this is amply compensated in the one we are about to specify;—and, some may be surprised, when we intimate, that of far superior importance to the sympathy of the rich for the poor, do we hold to be the sympathy of the poor for one another. In the veriest depths of unmixed and extended plebeianism, and where, for many streets together, not one house is to be seen which indicates more than the rank of a common labourer, are there feelings of mutual kindness, and capabilities of mutual aid, that greatly outstrip the conceptions of a hurried and superficial observer: And, but for pauperism, which has released immediate neighbours from the feeling they would otherwise have had, that in truth the most important benefactors of the poor are the poor themselves—there has been a busy internal operation of charity in these crowded lanes, and densely peopled recesses, that would have proved a more effectual guarantee against the starvation of any individual, than ever can be reared by any of the artifices of human policy. One who has narrowly looked to

some of these vicinities; and witnessed the small but numerous contributions that pour in upon a family whose distresses have attracted observation; and seen how food, and service, and fuel, are rendered in littles, from neighbours that have been drawn, by a kind of moral gravitation, to the spot where disease and destitution hold out their most impressive aspect; and has arithmetic withal for comparing the amount of these unnoticed items with the whole produce of that more visible beneficence which is imported from abroad, and scattered, by the hand of affluence, over the district, —We say that such an observer will be sure to conclude, that, after all, the best safeguards against the horrors of extreme poverty have been planted by the hand of nature, in the very region of poverty itself—that the numerous, though scanty rivulets which have their rise within its confines, do more for the refreshment of its more desolate places, than would the broad streams that may be sent forth upon it, from the great reservoir of pauperism: And, if it be true, that it is just the stream which has dried up the streamlets, and caused them to disappear from the face of a territory, over which they would else have diffused a healthful and kindly irrigation—then should pauperism be abolished, let but humanity abide, in all the wonted attributes and sympathies which belong to her, and we may be sure, that for the supplies which issued from the storehouse of public charity, there would be ample compensation, in the breaking out of those manifold lesser charities, that never fail to be evolved, when human suffer-

ing is brought into contact with human observation.

We cannot, at present, expatiate, as perhaps we shall, on these compensatory processes, that would most surely be stimulated into greater power and activity by the abolition of pauperism; but the last of them is of such weight and importance in the argument, that ere we proceed to the main topic of this chapter, we may offer a few remarks in the way of illustration. Those sympathies, which lie deeply seated and diffusively spread among a population, form a mine of productiveness, that lies very much hidden from the eye of that philanthropy which moves on the elevated walk of city committees, and great national societies. Perhaps the most palpable argument that could be addressed to our institutional men, upon this subject, is the fact of the Bible Society drawing a larger revenue from the weekly pennies of the poor, than from the splendid donations, and yearly contributions, of the wealthy. It is a striking evidence of the power of accumulated littles, and proves how much the number compensates for the smallness of the individual offerings. Now, though this be a very palpable demonstration of the importance of the lower orders to the cause of charity, yet it is far from being an adequate demonstration. This fact, convincing as it is, does not sufficiently represent the might and the magnitude of those resources which lie deposited among the labouring classes, and would, in a natural state of things, emit a far more plentiful relief upon human indigence than is done by all the

paraded charities of our land. It is delightful to perceive how readily the poor have been interested on the behalf of a great Christian society. But there is a still more forcible appeal made to their hearts, by the *spectacle* of human suffering, and in circumstances of life like their own. There is a more constantly plying address to their sympathies, in the disease or helplessness of a next-door neighbour, than even in the weekly recurrence of a visitor for their humble contribution. There is a common feeling among the men of the operative classes, inspired by the very condition which they in common occupy; for fellowship with one in his lot is felt as a sort of claim to fellowship with him in his love and liberality. In these, and in many other principles of our nature, there are daily and most powerful excitements to charity, which, if never interfered with by pauperism, would have yielded a far more abundant produce to the cause, than ever descended upon it, in golden showers, from all the rich, and mighty, and noble of the nation put together. It is the little, combined with the numerous and the often, which explains this mystery. Each offering is small—but there is an unknown multitude of offerers, and under incessant application too, from the near and the constant exhibition of suffering at their very doors. Had art not attempted to supersede nature, or the wisdom of man to improve upon that wisdom which poured into the human heart those sympathies that serve to oil and to uphold the mechanism of human society, there would have emerged out of this state of things, a far more plenteous dispensa-

tion of relief than the wealthy have ever given, or even, perhaps, than the wealthy could afford; whose occasional benefactions come far short, in the quantity of aid, of those kind offices which are rendered, and those humble meals which are served up, and those nameless little participations into which a poor householder is admitted with the contiguous families, and all that unrevealed good which circulates, unseen, throughout every neighbourhood where the native play of human feeling is not disturbed by the foreign and adventitious influences of a perverse human policy.

There is a statement, made by Mr Buxton, in his valuable work upon Prisons, which is strongly illustrative of the force of human sympathy. In the gaol of Bristol, the allowance of bread to the criminals is beneath the fair rate of human subsistence; and, to the debtors, there is no allowance at all, leaving these last to be provided for by their own proper resources, or by the random charity of the town. It has occasionally happened that both these securities have failed them: and that some of their number would inevitably have perished of hunger, had not the criminals, rather than endure the spectacle of so much agony, given a part of their own scanty allowance, and so shared in the suffering along with them. It is delightful to remark, from this, that the sympathy of humble life, instead of the frail and imaginative child of poetry, is a plant of such sturdy endurance as to survive even the roughest of those processes by which a human being is conducted to the last stages of depravity. Now, if the working of this good principle may

thus be detected among the veriest outcasts of human society, shall we confide nothing to its operation among the people and the families of ordinary life? If such an intense and unbroken fellow-feeling be still found to exist, even after the career of profligacy is run, are we to count upon none of its developments before the career of profligacy is entered on? In other words, if in prisons there be the guarantee of natural sympathy against the starvation of the destitute, is it too sanguine an affirmation of our species, that there is the same and a stronger guarantee in parishes? The truth is, such is the recoil of one human being from the contemplation of extreme hunger in another, that the report of a perishing household, in some deepest recess of a city lane, would inflict a discomfort upon the whole neighbourhood, and call out succour, in frequent and timely forthgoings, from the contiguous families. We are aware that pauperism lays an interdict upon this beautiful process. Pauperism relaxes the mutual care and keepership which, but for it, would have been in more strenuous operation; and has deadened that certain feeling of responsibility which would have urged and guided to many acts of beneficence. There can be little doubt, that the opening up of this great artificial fountain has reduced that natural fountain, the waters of which are so deeply seated, and so diffusively spread, throughout the whole mass and interior of a population. But, in countries where pauperism is unknown, and popular sympathy is allowed to have its course, it sends forth supplies upon human want which are altogether incalculable;

and still, in our own country, is it ready to break forth in streams of rich and refreshing compensation, so soon as pauperism is done away.

It will be seen, then, that we do not hold a good Christian economy to be indispensable to the negation of pauperism. We think, that simply upon the absence of this system from any country, there will be in it less of unrelieved poverty than when the system is in full establishment and operation. We would confide this cause to the great fountains of relief which are provided by nature, and conceive that, when the people are left to themselves, they, in the first instance, by their own economy, would prevent the great majority of that indigence which now meets the dispensations of pauperism; that, in the second instance, the care of individuals, for the aged and the helpless of their own kindred, would, operating in each separate circle of relationship, work a mighty reduction on the territory of want; that, in the third instance, a still farther reduction would be effected, by the more copious descent of liberality from the wealthier to the poorer classes; and, to complete the wholesome process, that internal charity among the poor themselves would fill up the many countless vacuities which escape the eye of general observation. We cannot affirm, that never, in any instance, would there be a remainder of want unprovided for; but we are strongly persuaded, that it would fall infinitely short of the want which is now unreached and unrelieved by all the ministrations of legalised charity. And we reckon that this argument would hold, even apart from Christianity, on the mere play of

those natural principles of self-preservation, and social and relative sympathy, which are inseparable from the human constitution. So that in Constantinople the condition of the people would be economically worse, were pauperism introduced among them; and, in London, the condition of the people would, at this moment, have been economically better, had pauperism never been instituted. In those great towns of continental Europe, where the compulsory relief of poverty is unknown, we read of no such distress as should urge the adoption of such an expedient. There may occur a very rare instance of positive starvation; but let it never be forgotten, that instances also occur in the British metropolis: and we do think it more likely to happen there, just because of pauperism, which has substituted the tardy and circuitous process of a court of administration, for the prompt and timely compassions of an immediate neighbourhood. So that, whatever the bearing may be of a good Christian economy, upon this question, we neither regard it as indispensable to the exemption of a country from pauperism, nor do we regard pauperism as conducive to the well-being of a country where Christianity is unknown.

But, though it were utterly misconceiving the truth and philosophy of the whole subject, to affirm that Christianity was indispensable, yet there is a way in which it acts as an element of mighty power and importance in this department of human affairs It is most true, that nature, when simply left to the development of her own spontaneous and inborn principles, will render a better service to

humanity than can be done by the legal charity of England; but it is also true, that Christianity urges this development still farther, and so gives an augmented and overpassing sufficiency to nature. It is true, that it is better to commit the cause of human want to the safeguards which nature has already instituted, than to a compulsory assessment; but it is also true, that Christianity strengthens these safeguards, and so creates a far more effective defence against those miseries that might be apprehended to ensue on the abolition of pauperism. It is true, that, in every assemblage of human beings, there are proper and primary fountains of relief, from the mere effiux of which there cometh the discharge of a more abundant blessing upon the poor than ever can be made to descend from the storehouse of public charity; but it is also true, that Christianity both quickens the play, and adds to the productiveness, of all these fountains. The man who is a Christian will be the most ready to labour with his own hands, rather than be burdensome; and, if he have dependent relatives, he will be the most ready to provide for those of his own house and of his own kindred; and, if he be rich, he will be the most willing to distribute and ready to communicate; and, if he be poor, still, with his humble mite, will he aspire after the blessing that is promised to a giver, and shun, to the uttermost, the condition of a receiver. Christianity does not originate these principles in society, but Christianity adds prodigiously to the power and intenseness of their operation—so that without, perhaps, striking out any fountain diverse from

those that we have already enumerated, does it, by simply stimulating these, call forth a mighty addition to those healing waters, that serve both to sustain the comfort and to assuage the sufferings of our species.

And let us not estimate the beneficial effect of Christianity, on this department of human life, merely by the number of people who have been so far influenced by its lessons, as to be spiritualised by them. This were, indeed, to reduce the worth and importance of the whole speculation. But there is, as we have already stated, an indirect power in Christianity to multiply, beyond the spread of its own essential principle through the hearts of men, those virtues which go to improve their social habits, and to rectify the many disorders which would otherwise agitate and disturb their social history. The sound Christian economy that regenerates the few for heaven, reforms the many into the frugality, and the industry, and the relative duty, and all the other moralities which stand allied with self-respect and decency of character upon earth. We should augur greatly more for a man of congregational habits, in regard to his providential management, and his unbroken independence, and his generous sympathy for neighbours and kinsfolk, than we should for the man who lived beyond the pale of all ecclesiastical cognizance, and spent his unhallowed Sabbath in shameful and sordid profanation. Now, what we affirm is, that a local, and, at the same time, a laborious clergyman, has the power of thus congregating his people, greatly beyond his power

of converting them: and out of the civic virtues which he would be the instrument of diffusing through his parish, would there be a strong additional excitement given to all those various sources of distribution and supply, which were sure to be re-opened, and to re-issue, the moment that pauperism was withdrawn; and which, either by the prevention, or by the positive relief of indigence, would leave much less of human suffering unredressed, than we now witness under a full and long established operation of public charity.

But, beside the growth and multiplication of the civic virtues, we have, under a good parochial economy, other, and, perhaps, more powerful securities for an ample compensation being rendered to human want, should pauperism be done away. It would have the effect of enlisting the very pride and selfishness of our nature into the service. Out of the mingling and acquaintanceship that would ensue, among the various orders of society, there were a greatly more honourable feeling that would arise in the breasts of the poor, and uphold them in their generous stand against the humiliations of public charity. The homage rendered to the dignity of each household, by the annual presence of the minister, and the more frequent visitations of his parochial agents, were not without its efficacy, in rearing a preventive barrier to stop the descent and the degradation of many families. When the rich go forth on a plebeian territory, in the ostensible capacity of almoners, we are aware what the character of that stout and clamorous reaction is, which is sure to come back upon them.

But let them go forth on those topics of our common nature, which tend to assimilate all the ranks of life; let education, or piety, or friendship, be the occasions of those short, but frequent interviews, where the inequalities of condition are, for the time, forgotten; let Christian philanthropy, for which a right parochial apparatus would give such ample scope and exercise, guide the footsteps of our official men to the humblest of our city habitations, and there suggest, in conversation, all that sense and sympathy can devise for the immortal well-being of the inmates;—though these applications should fail, in many thousand instances, of their direct and primary design, yet let them be repeated and kept up, and one result will be sure to come out of them—a more erect, and honourable, and high minded population, less able than before to brook the exposure of their necessities to the observation of another, and more strenuous than before in sustaining their respectability, on that loftier platform to which they have been admitted, by the ennobling intercourse of their superiors in society.

There is one style of companionship with the poor, that is fitted to call forth a rapacity, which all the ministrations of opulence cannot appease. There is another style of it, that is fitted to call forth delicacies of a far softer and more sensitive character than they often get credit for. The agent of a society for the relief of indigence, who carries a visible commission along with him, is sure to be assailed, in full and open cry, at every corner, with the importunities of alleged want. The

bearer of a moral and spiritual dispensation will not, in the long run, be the less welcome of the two, nor will his kindness be less appreciated, nor will the courtesy of his oft-repeated attentions fail of sending the charm of a still gladder sensation into the heart. The truth is, that it is in the absence of every temptation, either to cunning or sordidness, when the intercourse between the rich and the poor is in the end most gratifying, as well as most beneficial, to both; and these are the occasions upon which the unction of a finer influence is felt, with each of the parties, than ever can have place in the dispensations of common charity. When one goes ostensibly forth among the people as an almoner, the recoil that is felt by them, from the exposure of their necessities, is overborne, at the very first interview; and the barrier of delicacy is forced, and forced irrecoverably: so as that deceit and selfishness shall henceforth become perpetual elements in every future act of fellowship between them. When one goes forth among them on a spiritual enterprise, and introduces himself on a topic that reduces to a general level the accidental distinctions of humanity, and addresses a poor man as a sharer in the common hopes and common interests of the species, he is relieved, for the time, from all sense of inferiority, nor will he be the first to revive it in his own breast, by descending to the language of complaint or supplication. It is thus that the acquaintanceship between the rich and the poor, which is sustained by converse with them on all other topics save that of their necessities, is sure to increase the reluctance of the poor to obtrude

this last topic on the attentions of the wealthy. It is thus that a mere Sabbath teacher comes speedily into contact with such delicacies, among the lower orders, as are not suspected even to exist by the administrators of a city hospital. And it is thus, that under a right Christian economy, there would arise, in the hearts, and among the habitations of the poor themselves, a most effectual barrier against all that importunate and insatiable urgency of demand, which has been so fostered among the people by debasing pauperism.

And the system of locality, when carried into effect, not only exposes the people to the view of their superiors, but it exposes them more fully and frequently to the view of each other. One sure result of this system is, that it supplies contiguous families with common places of resort, as the parish church and the parish schools; and furnishes them with objects of common interest and attention, as their minister, or the Sabbath teachers of their children; and groupes the inhabitants of small vicinities into occasional domestic assemblages, as when the minister performs his annual round of household ministrations, or under the fostering care of himself and his agents, the more religious of a district hold their weekly meetings for the exercises of piety. It is unavoidable, that, with such processes as these, a closer and more manifold acquaintanceship shall grow up in every immediate neighbourhood; and that moral distance which now obtains, even among families in a state of juxtaposition, shall be greatly reduced; and the people will live more under the view, and within

the observation of the little besetting public wherewith their ties of fellowship are now more strengthened and multiplied than before; and this, independently of all Christian and all civic virtue, will bring the natural pride of character into alliance with those various habits which go to counteract the vice and the misery of pauperism. The consciousness of a nearer and more impending regard than is now directed towards them, would make them all more resolute to shun the degradation of charity, and the obloquy they would incur by a shameful abandonment of their relatives, and even that certain stigma which would be affixed to them, were the liberality of some open-hearted neighbour eulogised in their hearing, and they felt themselves to suffer by the comparison. The local system, in short, would bring a sense of character into more quick and habitual play among the intimacies of a city population; and this were favourable to the growth among them of, at least, the more popular and respectable virtues; and, when they are a little raised, by education and intelligence, there is not a surer forfeiture of respect than that which is incurred by him who unworthily stoops to the attitude of a supplicant and a waiter on for public charity—nor is there a readier homage of popularity awarded, than that which is openly and cordially given, when a poor man shares of his humble means among the poorer who are around him.

And here let it be remarked, that though the direct power and principle of Christianity are limited to a few, yet that reflex influence which emanates from them upon the many, would tell with

peculiar effect on the economic habits of the whole population. The one Christian of a city lane may fail to reach a spiritual lesson into the hearts of his acquaintances, and yet, by the very dress of his children, and the decent sufficiency of his whole establishment, hold forth another obvious lesson, that may be learned and copied by them all. And they may vie with him, at least, in decency of condition, if not in devoutness of character; and, though they decline to run the heavenly race along with him, yet will they far more readily enter with him into rivalship for the honour and the becoming air of independence upon earth. There is an utter inadvertency to the laws of our universal nature, on the part of those who think, that in the humblest circles of plebeianism, there is not the operation of the very same principles which may be witnessed in the higher circles of fashionable life. There is a style of manner and appearance that is admired among the poor, and which, when introduced by one of the families, constitutes it the leader of a fashion that is apt to be emulated by all the others. There is a certain *bon ton*, by which the average feeling of every district is represented; and nothing contributes more powerfully to raise it, than the residence of an individual, whose attention to the duties of his station has kept him nobly and manfully afloat above the degradations of charity. The infection of such an example spreads among the neighbours. What he shuns from principle they spurn at from pride; and thus the very envies and jealousies of the human heart go to augment our confidence, that

should the economy of pauperism in our cities give place to a right Christian economy, there will, in the spirit and capabilities of the people themselves, be an ample compensation for all that is withdrawn from them.

We are most thoroughly aware of the incredulity wherewith all such statements are listened to, by men hacknied among the details of official business; and who hold every argument, that is couched in general language, and is drawn from the principles of human nature, to be abstract and theoretical. But they should be taught, that their institutional experience is not the experience which throws any light upon the real and original merits of this question—that though they have been working for years, with their fingers, among the accounts and the manipulations of city pauperism, their eyes may never, all the while, have been upon the only relevant field of observation—that practitioners though they be, it is not at all in the tract of their deliberations or their doings, where true practical wisdom is to be gotten—that the likeliest counsellor upon this subject, is not the man who has travelled, however long and laboriously, over the inner department of committeeship; but the man who travels, and that on an errand distinct from common charity, over the outer department of the actual and living population. In one word, a local Sabbath teacher, with ordinary shrewdness of observation, and who meets the people free of all that disguise which is so readily assumed, on every occasion of mercenary intercourse between hem and their superiors,—from him would we

expect a greatly sounder deliverance, than from the mere man of place or of penmanship, on the adequacy of the lower orders to their own comfort and their own independence. It is a sufficient reply to the charge of sanguine or visionary, which is so often advanced against our confident affirmations upon this topic, that we invite the testimonies of all those with whom a district of plebeianism is the scene of their daily, or, at least, their frequent visitations. And it is no small contribution which a good Christian economy will render towards the solution of this great political problem—that it so penetrates and opens up the interior of that mass, which has hitherto been shrouded in the obscurity of its own denseness, from all previous inquirers—that it unseals this book of mystery, and offers a distinct leaf, which may be easily overtaken by each one of its labourers—that it can thus lay an immediate hand on the *ipsa corpora* of the question; and rear the true doctrine of pauperism on the same solid and inductive basis by which all truth and all philosophy are upholden.

We know not how great the artificial transformation is, which the pauperism of two centuries may have wrought on the individual habits, and the mutual sympathies, of a London population; or to what degree it may have overborne either the cares of self-preservation, or the kindnesses of neighbourly regard towards those children of misfortune and want, who chance to come within the range of their daily observation. We can well believe, that the sum which issues from legal charity, upon a given district of the metropolis, could

not, all at once, be dispensed with; the native capabilities of the people being so much weakened and impaired, by the very system that now comes in aid of the deficiencies it has itself created. But of the very worst and most wretched vicinities of Glasgow, where pauperism is only yet in progress, and has not attained such a sanction and settlement as to have effaced the original habitudes of nature, we can aver that, under a right economy, and without the importation of any charity from abroad, each is sufficient, in its own internal resources, for the subsistence of all its families. And were people only left to themselves, and made to feel that they were the rightful keepers of their own households and their own kinsfolk, and committed back again to those spontaneous charities, which the sight of suffering never fails to awaken—it would be found that the mechanism of human laws has, by thwarting and doing violence to the laws of the human constitution, superseded a previous and a better mechanism.

That district of the Saltmarket, which is referred to in the second chapter of this work, has now, for several years, been under the superintendance of the same teacher who originally assumed it. In respect of poverty, we should regard it as rather beneath the average state of our operative population; and, accordingly, it was proposed, at the outset, that all the expenses of the little institution which has been reared in it, including the rent of the room, with the cost of the fuel and candles, and a small library of books, should be defrayed by the subscriptions of the charitable. But this had not been prosecuted with vigour enough,

to meet all the charges of this humble concern; and the teacher resolved to throw himself on the good-will and resources of the parents themselves. It is true, that by a small monthly payment, which is most cheerfully rendered on the part of his scholars, he has been enabled to overtake and to overpass all the expenses of his little seminary. The *materiel*, it may be thought, of this free-will offering, is so insignificant as to prove nothing. But the alacrity wherewith it was rendered; the conscious ability that was indicated for the required sacrifice, and for a great deal more; the additional interest that was felt in the school, when each was thus led to regard it as a nursling and a dependant of his own; the unexcepted support that was given, not one family being deficient of its quota, though the very poorest of the territory had to share in it; the certain air and consequence of patronage wherewith this proposal invested all the contributors; the delight expressed by them at their own independence, not unmixed, perhaps, with somewhat of a generous disdain towards any obligation of the sort from their betters in society,—these were the tokens of a sufficiency and a spirit that still remain with the very humblest of our peasantry, and are enough to indicate such elements of moral greatness, as only need to be called back again from the dormancy into which they had been cradled by the hand of pauperism, when they shall rear anew, and in the bosom of our community, all those guarantees for the sustenance of our people that this cruel foster-mother has destroyed.

We are glad to understand that so good an example is now beginning to be copied; and that about ten of the Sabbath school districts, in that neighbourhood of the town, have been recently laid under the same system of management. There is a most willing concurrence, in them all, on the part of the population; and fitted as such an economy is, both to honour them, and to fasten, more tenaciously than before, the roots of each little association, among the families that are thus admitted to nourish and to uphold it, we would earnestly recommend the same practice to every other local teacher, who may have obtained a sufficient intimacy with the people, to have made sure of their confidence, and of the satisfaction which they feel in the kindness and usefulness of his labours.

We have already endeavoured abundantly to prove, that a good Christian economy is not indispensable to the negation of pauperism, in a country where it has never been established—seeing that the simple abolition of it would naturally, and of itself, work out a great improvement on the economic condition of the people. Still, however, Christianity would heighten and secure this improvement the more, by the re-enforcements it would bring, both to human sobriety and to human sympathy. And, in a country where pauperism is established, and where it is proposed, through the extinction of it, to commit the cause of human suffering back again to that individual care and kindness from which it has been so unwisely wrested by the hand of legislation—we think that nothing

could more effectually speed and ensure this great retracing movement, than the parochial subdivisions, and the pure patronages, and the wholesome influences on the popular mind, which were attendant on the working of a right ecclesiastical apparatus, rightly administered. It were well that the existence of a good Christian economy, and the decline of pauperism, went gradually and contemporaneously together, so as that the complete establishment of the one, shall come, at length, to be the death and disappearance of the other; and, although the former be not absolutely essential to the latter, yet, we know of no other way, than through the attainment of the Christian desideratum, in which the economic desideratum would be arrived at with greater practical facility and smoothness, or with the hazard of less violence being rendered to the deeply rooted prejudices of the land.

It is on this account, that the merely secular philanthropist, reckless though he be of eternity, and all its concerns, should hail a good Christian economy, as he would the fittest and the likeliest instrument of a great civil and political reformation. And it is no less true, that the Christian philanthropist, though he sits comparatively loose to this world and all its evanescent interests, should desiderate the abolition of pauperism, as he would the removal of a deadly impediment in the way of that great spiritual reformation, to the hastening of which he consecrates his labours and his prayers. On the one hand, we fear not the contempt of the statesman, when we affirm, that

the salvation of one soul is an achievement of surpassing worth and importance to the deliverance of our whole empire from the weight of its assessments for pauperism. And we fear not, on the other hand, the dislike of the theologian to our announcement, that the pauperism itself is a moral nuisance, which must be swept away from these realms, ere we can rationally hope for a very powerful or prevalent spirit of Christianity in the land. That which letteth must be taken out of the way. It is, indeed, a heavy incumbrance on the work of a clergyman, whose office it is to substitute among his people the graces of a new character, for the hardness, and the selfishness, and the depraved tendencies of nature, that, in addition to the primary and essential evils of the human constitution, he has to struggle, in his holy warfare, against a system so replete as pauperism is, with all that can minister to the worst, or that can wither up the best, affections of our species. With what success can he acquit himself as a minister of the New Testament, in the presence of this legalised and widely spread temptation, by which every peasant of our land is solicited to cast away from him the brightest of those virtues wherewith the morality of this sacred volume is adorned? By what charm shall he woo them from earth, and bear their hearts aspiringly to heaven, while such a bait and such a bribery are held forth to all the appetites of earthliness,—or, how can he find a footing for the religion of charity and peace, in a land broiling with litigation throughout all its parishes, and where charity, transformed out of

its loveliness, has now become an angry firebrand, for lighting up the most vindictive passions and the fiercest jealousies of our nature?

It is a question deeply interesting to human morality, whether, when it lies within his choice, it is the more becoming part in man to face a temptation or to flee from it. The one, and consistent, and oft repeated deliverance of the gospel upon this subject, is, that in every case where it can be done, without the dereliction of what is incumbent in the given circumstances, the temptation ought to be shunned rather than resisted; and that we have no reason to calculate on the present success, or future moral prosperity, of any individual, who, uncalled, goes daringly and wantonly forth upon the arena of trial, however strenuous his purposes, and however firm his confidence of victory. "Enter not into temptation," is one of the recorded precepts of the New Testament; and "lead us not into temptation," is one of the prescribed prayers. It is our duty not merely to maintain a distance from evil, but as much as in us lies to maintain a distance from the excitements to evil. And it were well that this principle, one of the most important which relates to the discipline of character, and altogether suited as it is to the real mediocrity of the human powers, was not merely proceeded on in the walk and sanctification of private Christians, but was adverted to by those who, elevated to the guardianship of the public interests, ought not to overlook the most precious of them all, even the virtue of the commonwealth. What an Augean stable, for

example, is the whole business of excise and custom-house regulation!—nor were there a task more truly honourable to the legislature of Britain, that has been so busied of late with plans of economy for reducing the expenditure, than now to busy itself with the details of a still nobler reformation. It were a still higher walk of improvement, did the government, which now studies to bear as lightly as possible on the means of the people, study also to bear as lightly as possible on the morals of the people. To carry the abolition of pensions and places is reckoned a triumph in the contest between power and patriotism. But there is a yet more generous triumph in reserve, for a yet more unspotted patriotism—even the abolition of those many provocatives which are now held out to fraud, and falsehood, and perjury, on the part of our regular traders, and to the more daring iniquities of contraband, on the part of a bolder and hardier population. It is, indeed, a melancholy lesson that we read of our nature, when we note of the practice of smuggling, how sure it is to flourish just up to the degree of encouragement that is enacted and provided by parliament—how, from the two elements of the risk and the profit, there may be computed a certain specific bounty upon this lawless adventure, that will specifically call out as much of crime and cupidity as shall seize upon every shilling of it—and how every addition made to the bounty, by some careless or unlucky clause, acts with all the certainty of physical attraction, in bringing on a consequent addition to the number of desperadoes, whom it lures from the pursuits and the peaceful

habits of regular industry: Or, in other words, such is the fragility of principle among men, that accurately in proportion to the length and breadth of the temptation, will be the corresponding dimensions of an offence that has demoralised whole provinces of the empire—seducing the people from all the decencies and sobrieties of their former life, and utterly unsettling the domestic habit of their families.

We hold pauperism to be a still more deadly antagonist to the morality of our nation, though neither so sudden nor so ostensible in the mischief which it inflicts upon human principle; and, instead of striking out local and visible eruptions, in certain parts of the body politic, holding forth a cup of seeming bounty, but which is charged with a slow and insinuating poison, wherewith it has tainted the whole frame of society. It effecteth its work of destruction, upon the character of man, more by sap than by storm. The family virtues have not been swept away by it with the violence of an inundation; but they have drooped and languished, and, at the end of a few generations, are now ready to expire. The mildew which it has sprinkled over the face of the community, has fallen, in small and successive quantities, from its hand; and it is only by an addition made every year, to this deleterious blight, that the evil at length is consummated. Like the Malaria in Italy, it has now attained a progress and a virulency, which begin to be contemplated with the awe of some great approaching desolation; and a sense of helplessness mingles with the terror which is inspir-

ed by the forebodings of a mighty disaster, that has been gathering along the lapse of time, into more distinct shape and more appalling magnitude. It is, indeed, a frightful spectacle; and the heart of the Christian, as well as of the civil philanthropist, ought to be solemnized by it. He, of all men, should not look on with indifference, while the vapour of this teeming exhalation so thickens and spreads itself throughout the whole moral atmosphere of our land: And, when he witnesses the fell malignity of its operation, both on the graver and more amiable virtues of our nature,—when he sees how diligence in the callings, and economy in the habits, of individuals, are alike extinguished by it, and both the tendernesses of relationship, and the wider charities of life, are chilled and overborne—we should expect of this friend to the higher interests of our species, that he, among all his fellows, would be most intent on the destruction of a system that so nips the best promises of spiritual cultivation, and, under the balefulness of whose shadow, are now withering into rapid decay, and sure annihilation, the very fairest of the fruits of righteousness.

END OF VOLUME FOURTEENTH.

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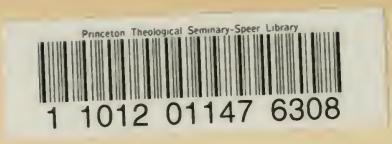
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